













THE  
CONFESSIONS OF ROUSSEAU

A New Edition thoroughly Revised  
Corrected and Extended by the addition  
of Passages omitted from Former Editions



ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
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*Volume III — Books VIII. and IX*







*Performance of 'Le d'eu du Village'*





## LIST OF PLATES

DEVIN DU VILLAGE . . . . . *frontispiece*

ROUSSEAU AND THÉRÈSE AT THE WINDOW  
*to face p. 9*

A MOONLIGHT CONVERSATION . . . „ 156







# THE CONFESSIONS OF JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

## PART II—BOOK VIII

[1749]

AT the end of the preceding book a pause was necessary. With this begins the long chain of my misfortunes deduced from their origin.

Having lived in the two most splendid houses in Paris, I had, notwithstanding my retiring disposition, made some acquaintances, amongst others, at Madame Dupin's, that of the young Hereditary Prince of Saxe-Gotha, and of the Baron de Thun, his tutor; at the house of M. de La Poplinière, that of Monsieur Seguy, friend of the Baron de Thun, and known in the literary world by his fine edition of Rousseau. The Baron invited Monsieur Seguy and myself to go and pass a day or two at Fontenay-sous-Bois, where the Prince had a house. We went, and as I passed Vincennes, at the sight of the donjon my feelings were acute, the effect of which the Baron perceived on my countenance. At supper the Prince mentioned the confinement of Diderot.

The Baron, wishing to hear what I had to say, accused the prisoner of imprudence; and I showed not a little of the same in the impetuous manner in which I defended him. This excess of zeal, inspired by the misfortune which had befallen a friend, was pardoned, and the conversation immediately changed. There were present two Germans in the service of the Prince: Monsieur Klupffel, a man of great intelligence, his chaplain, and who afterwards, having supplanted the Baron, became his tutor; the other was a young man named Monsieur Grimm, who served him as a reader until he could obtain some place, and whose indifferent appearance sufficiently proved the pressing necessity he was under of finding one. From this very evening Klupffel and I began an acquaintance which soon led to friendship. That with the Sieur Grimm did not make quite so rapid a progress; he made but few advances, and was far from having that presuming style which prosperity afterwards gave him. The next day at dinner, the conversation turning upon music, he spoke well on the subject. I was transported with joy when I learned that he could play an accompaniment on the harpsichord. After dinner was over, music was introduced, and we amused ourselves the rest of the afternoon on the Prince's harpsichord. Thus began that friendship which was at first so agreeable to me, afterwards so fatal, and of which I shall hereafter have so much to say.

At my return to Paris I learned the agreeable news that Diderot was released from the donjon,

and that he had, on his parole, the Castle and Park of Vincennes for a prison, with permission to see his friends. How painful was it to me not to be able instantly to fly to him ! But I was detained two or three days at Madame Dupin's by indispensable business. After ages of impatience, I flew to the arms of my friend. Joy inexpressible ! He was not alone : D'Alembert and the treasurer of the Sainte-Chapelle were with him. As I entered I saw nobody but himself. I made but one step, one cry : I riveted my face to his : I pressed him in my arms, without speaking to him except by tears and sighs : I stifled him with my affection and joy. The first thing he did, after quitting my arms, was to turn himself towards the ecclesiastic, and say : ' You see, sir, how much I am beloved by my friends.' My emotion was so great that it was then impossible for me to reflect upon this manner of turning it to advantage ; but, in sometimes thinking of it since, I have always been of opinion that, had I been in the place of Diderot, the idea he manifested would not have been the first to occur to me.

I found him much affected by his imprisonment. The donjon had made a terrible impression upon his mind, and, although he was very agreeably situated in the castle, and at liberty to walk where he pleased in the park, which is not enclosed even by a wall, he wanted the society of his friends to prevent him from yielding to melancholy. As I was the person most concerned for his sufferings, I imagined I should also be the friend the sight of whom would give

him most consolation ; on which account, notwithstanding very pressing occupations, I went every two days at furthest, either alone or accompanied by his wife, to pass the afternoon with him.

The heat of the summer was this year (1749) excessive. Vincennes is some two leagues from Paris. The state of my purse not permitting me to pay for hackney coaches, at two o'clock in the afternoon I went on foot when alone, and walked as fast as possible, that I might arrive the sooner. The trees by the side of the road, always lopped, according to the custom of the country, afforded but little shade, and, exhausted by fatigue, I frequently threw myself on the ground, being unable to proceed. I thought a book in my hand might make me moderate my pace. One day I took the *Mercur de France*, and as I walked and read I came to the following question, proposed by the Academy of Dijon for the prize of the ensuing year : 'Has the progress of sciences and arts contributed to corrupt or to purify morals ?'

The moment I read this I beheld another world, and became a different man. Although I have a vivid remembrance of the impression it made upon me, the detail has escaped my mind, since I communicated it to Monsieur de Malesherbes in one of my four letters to him. This is one of the singularities of my memory which merits to be remarked. It serves me in proportion to my dependence upon it ; the moment I have committed to paper that with which it was charged, it forsakes me, and I

have no sooner written a thing than I have forgotten it entirely. This singularity is the same with respect to music. Before I had learned the use of notes I knew a great number of songs: directly I knew how to sing an air set to music, I could not recollect any one of them; and at present I much doubt whether I should be able entirely to go through one of those of which I was most fond.

All I distinctly recollect upon this occasion, is that on my arrival at Vincennes I was in an agitation which approached delirium. Diderot perceived it; I told him the cause, and read to him the *prosopopœia* of Fabricius, written with a pencil under an oak-tree. He encouraged me to pursue my ideas, and to become a competitor for the prize. I did so, and from that moment I was ruined. All the rest of my life and its misfortunes were the inevitable effect of this moment of error.<sup>1</sup>

My sentiments became elevated with the most inconceivable rapidity to the level of my ideas. All my little passions were stifled by the enthusiasm of truth, liberty, and virtue; and, what is most astonishing, this effervescence continued in my mind for upwards of five years, to as great a degree, perhaps, as it has ever done in that of any other man.

I composed the discourse in a very singular manner, one which I have generally followed in all my other works. I dedicated to it the

<sup>1</sup> In Rousseau's second letter to Malesherbes, and in Marmontel's *Mémoires*, Book VIII., may be found some interesting particulars respecting this incident.

hours of the night in which sleep deserted me. I meditated in my bed with closed eyes, and in my mind turned over and over again my periods with incredible labour and care. Then, being finished to my satisfaction, I deposited them in my memory, until I had an opportunity of committing them to paper; but the time of rising and putting on my clothes made me lose everything, and when I took up my pen I recollected but little of what I had composed. I resolved to make Madame Le Vasseur my secretary. I had lodged her, with her daughter and husband, nearer to myself; and she, to save me the expense of a servant, came every morning to make my fire, and to do such other little things as were necessary. As soon as she arrived, I dictated to her while in bed what I had composed in the night, and this method, which for a long time I observed, preserved to me many things that I should otherwise have forgotten.

As soon as the discourse was finished, I showed it to Diderot. He was satisfied with the production, and suggested some corrections. However, this composition, full of force and fire, absolutely wants logic and order. Of all the works I ever wrote, this is the weakest in reasoning, and the most devoid of number and harmony; but, with whatever talent a man may be born, the art of writing is not very readily learned.

I sent off this piece without mentioning it to anybody, except, I think, to Grimm, with whom, after his going to live with the Comte de Frièse, I began to be upon the most intimate footing.

His harpsichord served as a rendezvous, and at it I passed with him all the moments I had to spare in singing Italian airs and *barcarolles* without intermission from morning till night, or rather from night until morning; and, when I was not to be found at Madame Dupin's, everybody concluded I was with Grimm at his apartment, in the public walk, or the theatre. I left off going to the Comédie-Italienne, of which I was free, but for which he had no liking, to go with him—and pay—to the Comedie-Française, of which he was passionately fond. In short, so powerful an attraction connected me with this young man, and I became so inseparable from him, that the poor 'aunt' herself was rather neglected—that is, I saw her less frequently, though in no moment of my life has my attachment to her been diminished.

This impossibility of dividing in favour of my inclinations the little time I had to myself, renewed more strongly than ever the desire I had long entertained of having but one home for Thérèse and myself; but the embarrassment of her numerous family, and especially the want of money to purchase furniture, had hitherto withheld me from accomplishing it. An opportunity to do so presented itself, and of this I took advantage. Monsieur de Francueil and Madame Dupin, clearly perceiving that eight or nine hundred francs a year were unequal to my wants, increased my salary of their own accord to fifty louis; and, moreover, Madame Dupin having heard that I wished to furnish my



lodgings, assisted me with some articles for that purpose. With this furniture and that which Thérèse already had, we made one common stock, and, having hired an apartment in the Hôtel de Languedoc, Rue de Grenelle-Saint-Honoré, kept by very honest people, we arranged ourselves in the best manner we could, and lived there peaceably and agreeably during seven years, at the end of which time I removed to the Hermitage.

Thérèse's father was a good old man, very mild in his disposition, and much afraid of his wife ; for this reason he had given her the surname of Lieutenant Criminel, which Grimm jocosely transferred afterwards to the daughter. Madame Le Vasseur did not want sense—that is, sharpness—and pretended to the politeness and airs of the first circles ; but she had a mysterious wheedling manner, which to me was insupportable, gave bad advice to her daughter, endeavoured to make her dissemble with me, and cajoled my friends at my expense and at that of each other ; excepting these circumstances, she was a tolerably good mother, because she found her account in being so, and concealed the faults of her daughter to turn them to her own advantage. This woman, who had so much of my care and attention, to whom I made so many little presents, and by whom I had it extremely at heart to make myself beloved, was, from the impossibility of my succeeding in this wish, the only cause of the uneasiness that I suffered in my little establishment. Except the effects of this cause, I enjoyed during these six or seven





WITH THIRKIST AT THE WINDOW

years the most perfect domestic happiness of which human weakness is capable. The heart of my Therèse was that of an angel ; our attachment increased with our intimacy, and we were daily more and more convinced how much we were made for each other. Could our pleasures be described, their simplicity would cause laughter --our walks together outside of the city, where I magnificently spent eight or ten sous in some *guinguette* ; our little suppers at my window, seated opposite to each other upon two little chairs, placed upon a trunk, which filled up the space of the embrasure. In this situation the window served us as a table, we breathed the fresh air, enjoyed the prospect of the environs and the people who passed ; and, although upon the fourth story, looked down into the street as we ate. Who can describe, who can feel, the charms of these repasts, consisting only of a loaf of coarse bread, a few cherries, a morsel of cheese, and a small bottle of wine which we drank between us ? Friendship, confidence, intimacy, sweetness of disposition, how delicious are your seasonings ! We sometimes remained in this situation until midnight, and never thought of the hour, until informed of it by the good-woman of the house. But let us quit these details, which must seem insipid or laughable. I have always said and felt that real enjoyment was not to be described.

Much about the same time I indulged in one, a more gross enjoyment, the last of the kind with which I have to reproach myself. I have observed that the minister Klupffel was an

amiable man ; my connections with him were almost as intimate as those I had with Grimm, and in the end became as familiar ; they sometimes ate at my apartment. These repasts, a little more than simple, were enlivened by the witty and extravagant wantonness of expression of Klupffel, and the diverting Germanicisms of Grimm, who had not yet become a purist. Sensuality did not preside at our little orgies, but merriment made up for that, and we enjoyed ourselves so well together that we knew not how to separate. Among other household goods, Klupffel had furnished himself with a little girl, who, notwithstanding this, was at the service of anybody, because he could not support her entirely himself. One evening as we were going into the café, we met him coming out with the intention of going to sup with her. We rallied him ; he revenged himself gailantly, by inviting us to the same supper and there rallying us in turn. The poor creature appeared to be of a good disposition, mild, and little fitted for the way of life in which an old hag she had with her did her best to instruct her. Wine and conversation enlivened us to such a degree that we forgot ourselves. The amiable Klupffel was unwilling to do the honours by halves, and we all three successively visited the next chamber, in company with his poor little girl, who knew not whether to laugh or cry. Grimm has always maintained that he never touched her ; it was therefore to amuse himself with our impatience that he remained so long with her, and if he abstained, there is not much probability of

his having done so from scruple, because, previously to his going to live with the Comte de Frièse, he had lodged with girls of the town in this same quarter of Saint-Roch.

I left the Rue des Moineaux, where this girl lived, as much ashamed as Saint-Preux when he left the house in which he had become intoxicated; and when I wrote his story I well remembered my own.<sup>1</sup> Therèse perceived by some sign, and especially by my confusion, that I had something with which I reproached myself. I relieved my mind by a frank and immediate confession. I did well, for the next day Grimm came in triumph to relate to her my crime with aggravation, and since that time he never failed maliciously to recall it to her recollection. In this he was the more culpable, since I had freely and voluntarily given him my confidence, and had a right to expect he would not make me repent of it. I never had a more convincing proof than on this occasion of the goodness of my Therèse's heart: she was more shocked at the behaviour of Grimm than offended by my infidelity, and I received nothing from her but tender reproaches, in which there was not the least appearance of any bitterness.

The simplicity of mind of this excellent girl was equal to her goodness of heart, and this is saying everything; but one instance of it, which is present to my recollection, is worthy of being related. I had told her that Klupffel was a minister,<sup>2</sup> and chaplain to the Prince of Saxe-

<sup>1</sup> See *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

<sup>2</sup> A Protestant clergyman.

Gotha. A minister was to her so singular a man that, oddly confounding the most dissimilar ideas, she took it into her head to take Klupffel for the Pope. I thought her mad the first time she told me, when I came in, that the Pope had called to see me. I made her explain herself, and lost not a moment in going to relate the story to Grimm and Klupffel, to whom we thenceforth gave the appellation of Pope. We gave to the girl in the Rue des Moineaux the name of Pope Joan. Our laughter was incessant; it almost stifled us. They who in a letter which it hath pleased them to attribute to me have made me say that I never laughed but twice in my life, did not know me at this period, nor in my younger days; for, if they had, surely the idea could never have entered their heads.

[1750-1752.] The year following (1750), not thinking more of my discourse, I learned it had gained the prize at Dijon. This news awakened all the ideas which had dictated it to me, gave them new animation, and completed the fermentation in my heart of that first leaven of heroism and virtue which my father, my country, and Plutarch had inspired in my infancy. Nothing now appeared great in my eyes but to be free and virtuous, superior to fortune and opinion, and wholly sufficient to oneself. Although a false shame and a fear of disapprobation at first prevented me from conducting myself according to these principles, and from suddenly flying in the face of the maxims of the age I lived in, my decision was then taken, and

I only delayed its accomplishment till opposition should assume such an irritating form that I could be sure of a triumph.

While I was thus philosophising upon the duties of man, an event happened which made me better reflect upon my own. Thérèse became pregnant for the third time. Too sincere with myself, too haughty to contradict my principles by my actions, I began to examine the destination of my children, and my connections with the mother, according to the laws of nature, justice, and reason, and those of that religion—pure, holy, and eternal, like its Author—which men have polluted while they pretend to purify it, and which, by their formularies, they have reduced to a mere religion of words, since the difficulty of prescribing impossibilities is but trifling to those by whom they are not practised.

If I deceived myself in my conclusions, nothing can be more astonishing than the security with which I depended upon them. Were I one of those men, born deaf to the soft voice of nature, in whom no sentiment of justice or humanity ever took root, this obduracy would be natural. But that warmth of heart, quick sensibility, and facility of forming attachments; the force with which they subdue me; my cruel sufferings when obliged to break them; the innate benevolence I cherish towards my fellow-creatures; the ardent love I bear to whatever is great, true, beautiful, and just; the horror in which I hold evil of every kind; the impossibility of hating, of injuring, or wishing to injure, any



one ; the soft and lively emotion I feel at the sight of whatever is virtuous, generous, and amiable—can these meet in the same mind with the depravity which without scruple treads under foot the most pleasing of all our duties ? No ; I feel and openly declare this to be impossible. Never in his whole life could Jean-Jacques be a man without sentiment, without compassion, an unnatural father. I may have been deceived, but never hardened myself. Were I to give my reasons I should say too much ; since they have seduced me, they would seduce many others. I will not, therefore, expose those young persons by whom I may be read to the same danger. I will satisfy myself by observing that my error was such, that, in abandoning my children to public education for want of the means of bringing them up myself ; in destining them to become workmen and peasants, rather than adventurers and fortune-hunters, I thought I was acting the part of a citizen and father, and considered myself as a member of the republic of Plato. Since that time the regrets of my heart have more than once told me I was deceived ; but my reason was so far from giving me the same intimation, that I have frequently returned thanks to Heaven for having, by this means, preserved them from the fate of their father, and that by which they were threatened the moment I should have been under the necessity of leaving them. Had I left them to Madame d'Épinay or Madame de Luxembourg, who, from friendship, generosity, or some other motive, offered to take care of

them in due time, would they have been more happy, better brought up, or honester men? To this I cannot answer, but I am certain they would have been taught to hate and, perhaps, betray their parents: it is much better that they have never known them.

My third child was, therefore, carried to the *Enfants-Trouvés* as well as the two former, and the next two were disposed of in the same manner; for I have had five children in all. This arrangement seemed to me so good, reasonable, and lawful, that if I did not publicly boast of it, the motive by which I was withheld was merely my regard for their mother; but I mentioned it to all those to whom I had declared our connection—to Diderot, to Grimm, afterwards to Madame d'Épinay, and, after another interval, to Madame de Luxembourg; and this freely and voluntarily, without being under the least necessity of doing it, having it in my power to conceal the step from all the world, for La Gouin was an honest woman, very discreet, and a person on whom I had the greatest reliance. The only one of my friends to whom it was in some measure my interest to reveal the matter, was Thierry the physician, who had the care of my poor 'aunt' in one of her lyings-in, in which she was very ill. In a word, there was no mystery in my conduct, not only on account of my never having concealed anything from my friends, but because I never perceived any harm in it. Everything considered, I chose the best destination for my children, or that which I thought to be such.

I should have wished, and still should wish, to have been brought up as they have been.

Whilst I was thus communicating what I had done, Madame Le Vasseur did the same thing amongst her acquaintance, but with less disinterested views. I had introduced her and her daughter to Madame Dupin, who, from friendship to me, showed them the greatest kindness. The mother confided to her the secret of the daughter. Madame Dupin, who is generous and kind, and to whom she never told how attentive I was to her, notwithstanding my moderate resources, in providing for everything, provided on her part for what was necessary, with a liberality which, by order of her mother, the daughter concealed from me during my residence at Paris, nor ever mentioned it until we were at the Hermitage, when she informed me of it, after having disclosed to me several other secrets of her heart. I knew not that Madame Dupin, who never took the least notice to me of the matter, was so well informed. I know not yet whether Madame de Chenonceaux, her daughter-in-law, was as much in the secret; but Madame de Francueil, her step-daughter, knew the whole and could not refrain from prattling. She spoke of it to me the following year, after I had left their house. This induced me to write her a letter upon the subject, which will be found in my collections, and wherein I gave such of my reasons as I could make public, without exposing Madame Le Vasseur and her family; the most determining reasons came from that quarter, and these I kept profoundly secret.

I can rely upon the discretion of Madame Dupin, and the friendship of Madame de Chenonceaux; I had the same dependence upon that of Madame de Francueil, who, however, was long dead before my secret made its way into the world. This it could never have done except by means of the persons to whom I intrusted it, nor did it until after my rupture with them. By this single fact they are judged; without exculpating myself from the blame I deserve, I prefer it to that which is due to their malignity. My fault is great, but it was an error. I have neglected my duty, but the desire of doing an injury never entered my heart; and the feelings of a father were never more eloquent in favour of children whom he never saw. But betraying the confidence of friendship, violating the most sacred of all engagements, publishing secrets confided to us, and wantonly dishonouring the friend we have deceived, and who in detaching himself from our society still respects us, are not faults, but baseness of mind and stains upon reputation.

I have promised my confession and not my justification, on which account I shall stop here. It is my duty to relate the truth, that of the reader to be just; more than this I never shall require of him.

The marriage of Monsieur de Chenonceaux rendered his mother's house still more agreeable to me, by the wit and merit of the new bride, a very amiable young person, who seemed to distinguish me amongst the scribes of Monsieur Dupin. She was the only daughter of Madame

la Vicomtesse de Rochechouart, a great friend of the Comte de Frièse, and consequently of Grimm, who was very attentive to her. However, it was I who introduced him to the daughter ; but their characters not suiting each other, this connection was not of long duration ; and Grimm, who from that time aimed at what was solid, preferred the mother, a woman of the world, to the daughter, who wished for steady friends, such as were agreeable to her without troubling her head about the least intrigue, or making any interest amongst the great. Madame Dupin, no longer finding in Madame de Chenonceaux all the docility she expected, made her house very disagreeable to her, and Madame de Chenonceaux, having a great opinion of her own merit, and perhaps of her birth, chose rather to give up the pleasures of society, and remain almost alone in her apartment, than to submit to a yoke she was not disposed to bear. This species of exile increased my attachment to her, by that natural inclination which excites me to approach the wretched. I found her mind metaphysical and reflective, although at times a little sophistical. Her conversation, which was by no means that of a young woman coming from a convent, had for me the greatest attraction ; yet she was not twenty years of age. Her skin was of a dazzling whiteness ; her figure would have been majestic had she held herself more upright ; her hair, which was fair, bordering upon ash-colour, and uncommonly beautiful, called to my recollection that of poor Mamma, in the flower of her age, and strongly

agitated my heart. But the severe principles I had just laid down for myself, by which at all events I was determined to be guided, secured me from the danger of her and her charms. During a whole summer I passed three or four hours every day with her, without any third person, seriously teaching her arithmetic, and fatiguing her with my innumerable figures and sums, without uttering a single word of gallantry, or even once glancing my eyes upon her. Five or six years later I should not have had so much wisdom or folly; but it was decreed that I was never to experience true love but once in my life, and that another person was to have the first and last sighs of my heart.

Since I had lived in the house of Madame Dupin, I had always been satisfied with my situation, without showing the least sign of a desire to improve it. The addition which, in conjunction with Monsieur de Francueil, she had made to my salary, was entirely of their own accord. This year Monsieur de Francueil, whose friendship for me daily increased, had it in his thoughts to place me more at ease, and in a less precarious situation. He was Receiver-General of Finance. Monsieur Dudoyer, his cashier, was old and rich, and wished to retire. Monsieur de Francueil offered me this place, and to prepare myself for it I went during a few weeks to Monsieur Dudoyer, to take the necessary instructions. But, whether my talents were ill suited to the employment, or that Dudoyer, who I thought wished to procure his place for another, was not in earnest in the

instructions he gave me, I acquired slowly and imperfectly the knowledge I needed, and could never understand the nature of accounts like these, purposely rendered intricate. However, without having possessed myself of the whole scope of the business, I learned enough of the method to pursue it without the least difficulty. I even entered on my new office. I kept the cash books and the cash ; I paid and received money, took and gave receipts ; and, although this business was as ill suited to my inclinations as to my abilities, maturity of years beginning to render me sedate, I was determined to conquer my disgust, and entirely devote myself to my new employment. Unfortunately, I had no sooner begun to proceed without difficulty than Monsieur de Francueil took a little journey, during which I remained intrusted with the cash, which, however, did not then amount to more than twenty-five or thirty thousand francs. The anxiety of mind this sum of money occasioned me made me perceive I was very unfit to be a cashier, and I have no doubt my uneasy situation, during his absence, contributed to the illness with which I was seized after his return.

I have observed in my First Part that I was born in a dying state. A defect in the bladder caused me during my early years to suffer an almost continual retention of urine, and my aunt Suzon, to whose care I was intrusted, had inconceivable difficulty in preserving me. However, she succeeded, and my robust constitution at length got the better of all my weakness, and my

health became so well established that, except the illness from languor, of which I have given an account, and frequent heats in the bladder, which the least heating of the blood rendered troublesome, I arrived at the age of thirty almost without feeling my original infirmity. The first time this recurred was upon my arrival at Venice. The fatigue of the voyage, and the extreme heat I had suffered, renewed the irritation, and gave me pains in the loins, which continued until the beginning of the winter. After having seen the *padoana*, I thought the end was come, but I suffered not the least inconvenience. After exhausting my imagination more than my body for my *Zulietta*, I enjoyed better health than ever. It was not until after the imprisonment of Diderot that the internal inflammation brought on by my journeys to Vincennès during the terrible heat of that summer gave me a violent attack of nephritis, since which time I have never recovered my primitive state of health.

At the period of which I speak, having, perhaps, fatigued myself too much in the unhealthy work of this accursed cash-office, I fell into a worse state than ever, and remained for five or six weeks in my bed in the most melancholy state imaginable. Madame Dupin sent to me the celebrated Morand, who, notwithstanding his address and the delicacy of his touch, made me suffer the greatest torments, and could never give me relief. He advised me to have recourse to Daran, whose appliances were better constructed, and reached the seat of the disorder.



But Morand, when he gave Madame Dupin an account of my condition, declared to her that I should not be alive in six months. This afterwards came to my ear, and made me reflect seriously on my situation, and the folly of sacrificing the agreeable repose of the few days I had to live to the slavery of an employment for which I felt nothing but disgust. Besides, how was it possible to reconcile the severe principles I had just adopted to a situation with which they had so little relation? Should not I, the cashier of a Receiver-General of Finances, have preached poverty and disinterestedness with a very ill grace? These ideas fermented so powerfully in my mind with the fever, and were so strongly impressed, that from that time nothing could remove them; and, during my convalescence, I confirmed myself with coolness in the resolutions I had taken during my delirium. I for ever abandoned all projects of fortune and advancement. Resolved to pass in independence and poverty the little time I had to exist, I made every effort of which my mind was capable to break the fetters of prejudice, and courageously to do everything that was right without giving myself the least concern about the judgment of mankind. The obstacles I had to combat, and the efforts I made to triumph over them, are inconceivable. I succeeded as well as it was possible, and to a greater degree than I myself had hoped for. Had I at the same time shaken off the yoke of friendship as well as that of prejudice, my design would have been accomplished—perhaps the greatest, at least the most useful one

to virtue, that mortal ever conceived ; but, whilst I despised the foolish judgments of the vulgar tribe who call themselves great and wise, I suffered myself to be influenced and led by self-styled friends, who, hurt at seeing me walk alone in a new path, while seeming to take measures for my happiness, used all their endeavours to render me ridiculous, and, that they might afterwards defame me, first strove to make me contemptible. It was less my literary fame than my personal reformation, of which I here state the period, that drew upon me their jealousy. They perhaps might have pardoned me for having distinguished myself in literature ; but they could never forgive my setting them, by my conduct, an example which seemed to reflect on themselves. I was born for friendship ; my mind and easy disposition nourished it without difficulty. As long as I lived unknown to the public I was beloved by all my private acquaintance, and I had not a single enemy ; but the moment I acquired literary fame I had no longer a friend. This was a great misfortune ; a still greater was that of being surrounded by people who called themselves my friends, and used the rights attached thereto to lead me on to destruction. The succeeding part of these memoirs will explain this odious conspiracy : I here speak of its origin, and the manner of the first intrigue will shortly appear.

In the independence in which I desired to live, it was, however, necessary to subsist. To this effect I thought of very simple means, namely, copying music at so much a page. If

any employment more solid would have fulfilled the same end I would have taken it up ; but this occupation being to my taste, and the only one which, without personal attendance, could procure me daily bread, I adopted it. Thinking I had no longer need of foresight, and, stifling vanity, from having been a cashier of Finance I made myself a copyist of music. I thought I had made an advantageous choice, and of this I have so little repented that I have never quitted my new profession until I was forced to do so, after taking a fixed resolution to return to it as soon as possible.

The success of my first discourse rendered the execution of this resolution more easy. As soon as it had gained the prize, Diderot undertook to get it printed. Whilst I was in my bed, he wrote me a note informing me of the publication and effect. 'It takes,' said he, 'beyond all imagination ; never was there an instance of a like success.' This favour of the public, by no means solicited, and towards an unknown author, gave me the first real assurance of my talents, of which, notwithstanding an inward feeling, I had always had my doubts. I conceived the great advantage to be drawn from it in favour of the course I had determined to pursue, and was of opinion that a copyist who had also some celebrity in the republic of letters was not likely to want employment.

The moment my resolution was fully confirmed, I wrote a note to Monsieur de Francueil, communicating to him my intentions, thanking him and Madame Dupin for all their kindness,

and offering my services in the way of my new profession. Francueil did not understand my note, and, thinking I was still in the delirium of fever, hastened to my apartment; but he found me so determined that all he could say was without the least effect. He went to Madame Dupin, and told her and everybody he met that I had become insane. I let him say what he pleased, and pursued my own plan. I began by changing my dress; I quitted laced clothes and white stockings; I put on a round wig, laid aside my sword, and sold my watch, saying to myself, with inexpressible pleasure, 'Thank Heaven! I shall no longer want to know the hour!' Monsieur de Francueil had the goodness to wait a considerable time before he disposed of my place. At length, perceiving me inflexibly resolved, he gave it to Monsieur d'Alibard, formerly tutor to the young Chenonceaux, and known as a botanist by his *Flora Parisiensis*.<sup>1</sup>

However austere my sumptuary reform might be, I did not at first extend it to my linen, which was fine and in great quantity, the remainder of my stock when at Venice, and to which I was particularly attached. By long considering it as essential to cleanliness, it had become dear to me as a luxury, and a costly one. Some person, however, was good enough

<sup>1</sup> I doubt not but these circumstances are now differently related by M. Francueil and his consorts; but I appeal to what he said of them at the time, and long afterwards, to everybody he knew, until the forming of the conspiracy, and of this men of common-sense and honour must have preserved a remembrance.—R.

to deliver me from this servitude. On Christmas Eve, whilst the *gouverneuses* were at vespers, and I was at the sacred concert, the door of a garret, in which all our linen was hung up after being washed, was broken open. Everything was stolen, and, amongst other things, forty-two of my shirts, of very fine linen, and which were the principal part of my stock. By the manner in which the neighbours described a man whom they had seen come out of the hotel with several parcels whilst we were all absent, Thérèse and I suspected her brother, whom we knew to be a worthless fellow. The mother strongly endeavoured to remove this suspicion, but so many circumstances concurred to prove it to be well founded, that, notwithstanding all she could say, our opinions remained still the same. I dared not make a strict search for fear of finding more than I wished to do. The brother never returned to the place where I lived, and at length was no more heard of by any of us. I was much grieved that Thérèse and myself should be connected with such a family, and I exhorted her more than ever to shake off so dangerous a yoke. This adventure cured me of my inclination for fine linen, and since that time all I have had has been very common, and more suitable to the rest of my dress.

Having thus completed my reformation, all my cares tended to render it solid and lasting, by striving to root out from my heart everything susceptible of receiving an impression from the judgment of men, or which, from the fear of blame, might turn me aside from any-

thing good and reasonable in itself. In consequence of the success of my work, my resolution made some noise in the world also, and procured me employment, so that I began my new profession with great appearance of success. However, several causes prevented me from succeeding in it to the same degree as under other circumstances might have been the case. In the first place my ill state of health. The attack I had just had brought on consequences which prevented my ever being so well as I was before; and I am of opinion that the physicians to whose care I intrusted myself did me as much harm as my illness. I was successively under the hands of Morand, Daran, Helvétius, Malouin, and Thierry—men able in their profession, and all of them my friends, who treated me each according to his own manner, without giving me the least relief, and weakened me considerably. The more I submitted to their direction, the yellower, thinner, and weaker I became. My imagination, which they terrified, judging of my situation by the effect of their drugs, presented to me, on this side of the tomb, nothing but continued sufferings from the gravel, stone, and retention of urine. Everything which gave relief to others, *tisanes*, baths, and bleeding, increased my tortures. Perceiving the bougies of Daran, the only ones that had any favourable effect, and without which I thought I could no longer exist, to give me a momentary relief, I procured, at great expense, a prodigious number of them, that, in case of Daran's death, I might never be at a loss. During the eight or ten

years in which I made such frequent use of these, they must, with what remain to me, have cost me fifty louis. It will easily be judged that such an expensive and painful treatment did not permit me to work without interruption, and that a dying man does not bring much ardour to the business by which he gains his daily bread.

Literary occupations caused another interruption not less prejudicial to my daily employment. My discourse had no sooner appeared than the defenders of letters fell upon me as if by preconcerted arrangement. My indignation was so raised at seeing so many little copies of Monsieur Josse,<sup>1</sup> who did not understand the question, attempt to decide upon it magisterially, that in my answer I gave some of them the worst of it. One Monsieur Gautier, of Nancy, the first who fell under my pen, was very roughly treated in a letter to Monsieur Grimm. The second was King Stanislaus himself, who did not disdain to enter the lists with me. The honour he did me obliged me to change my manner in combating his opinions. I made use of a graver style, but not less nervous, and, without failing in respect to the author, I completely refuted his work. I knew that a Jesuit called Père Menou had been concerned in it. I depended on my judgment to distinguish what was written by the Prince from the portions supplied by the monk, and, falling without mercy upon all the Jesuitical phrases, I remarked, as I went along, an anachronism which I thought

<sup>1</sup> See Molière's *L'Amour Médecin*, i. 1.

could come from nobody but the priest. This composition — which, for what reason I know not, has been less spoken of than any of my other writings—is so far the only one of its kind. I seized the opportunity which offered of showing to the public in what way an individual may defend the cause of truth even against a sovereign. It is difficult to adopt a more dignified and respectful manner than that in which I answered him. I had the happiness to have to do with an adversary to whom, without adulation, I could show every mark of the esteem with which my heart was full ; and this I did with success and a proper dignity. My friends, concerned for my safety, imagined they already saw me in the Bastille. This apprehension never once entered my head, and I was right in not being afraid. The good Prince, after reading my answer, said : ‘I have had enough of it ; I will not return to the charge.’ I have since that time received from him different marks of esteem and benevolence, of some of which I shall have occasion to speak ; and what I had written was read in France, and throughout Europe, without meeting the least censure.

In a little time I had another adversary whom I had not expected ; this was the same Monsieur Bordes, of Lyons, who ten years before had shown me much friendship, and from whom I had received several services. I had not forgotten him, but had neglected him from idleness, and had not sent him my writings for want of a ready opportunity to get them conveyed to his hands. I was therefore in the



wrong, and he attacked me ; this, however, he did politely, and I answered in the same manner. He replied more decidedly. This produced my last answer, after which I heard no more from him ; but he became my most violent enemy, took advantage of the time of my misfortunes to publish against me the most indecent libels, and made a journey to London on purpose to do me an injury.

All this controversy employed me a good deal, and caused me a great loss of time in my copying, without much contributing to the progress of truth, or the good of my purse. Pissot, at that time my bookseller, gave me but little for my pamphlets, frequently nothing at all ; for example, I never received a farthing for my first discourse—Diderot handed it to him as a gift. I was obliged to wait a long time for the little he gave me, and to take it from him sou by sou. Notwithstanding this, my copying went on but slowly. I had two things together upon my hands, which was the most likely means of doing them both ill.

They were very opposite to each other in their effects by the different manners of living to which they rendered me subject. The success of my first writings had given me celebrity. My new situation excited curiosity. Everybody wished to know that whimsical man who sought not the acquaintance of any one, and whose only desire was to live free and happy in the manner he had chosen ; this was sufficient to make the thing impossible to me. My apartment was continually full of people, who, under

different pretences, came to take up my time. The women employed a thousand artifices to engage me to dinner. The more unpolite I was with people, the more obstinate they became. I could not refuse everybody. While I made myself a thousand enemies by my refusals, I was incessantly a slave to my complaisance, and, in whatever manner I made my plans, I had not an hour in a day to myself.

I then perceived it was not so easy to be poor and independent as I had imagined. I wished to live by my profession : the public would not suffer me to do it. A thousand means were thought of to indemnify me for the time I lost. The next thing would have been showing myself, like Polichinelle, at so much a head. I know no dependence more cruel and degrading than this. I saw no other method of putting an end to it than refusing all kinds of presents, great and small, let them come from whom they would. This had no other effect than to increase the number of givers, who wished to have \*the honour of overcoming my resistance, and to force me, in spite of myself, to be under an obligation to them. Many, who would not have given me an ecu had I asked it of them, † incessantly importuned me with their offers, and, in revenge for my refusal, taxed me with arrogance and ostentation.

It will naturally be conceived that the resolution I had taken, and the system I wished to follow, were not agreeable to Madame Le Vasseur. All the disinterestedness of the daughter did not prevent her from following

the directions of her mother ; and the *gouverneuses*, as Gauffecourt called them, were not always so steady in their refusals as I was. Although many things were concealed from me, I perceived enough to enable me to judge that I did not see all, and this tormented me less by the accusation of connivance, which it was so easy for me to foresee, than by the cruel idea of never being master in my own apartments, nor even of my own person. I prayed, conjured, and became angry, all to no purpose ; the mother made me pass for an eternal grumbler, rude and capricious ; she was continually whispering to my friends—everything in my household was mysterious and a secret to me ; and, that I might not incessantly expose myself to noisy quarrelling, I no longer dared to take notice of what passed in it. A firmness of which I was not capable would have been necessary to withdraw me from this domestic strife. I knew how to complain, but not how to act ; they suffered me to say what I pleased, and continued to act as they thought proper. \*

This constant teasing, and the daily importunities to which I was subjected, at length rendered the house, and my residence at Paris, disagreeable to me. When my indisposition permitted me to go out, and I did not suffer myself to be led hither and thither by my acquaintances, I took a walk alone, and reflected on my grand system, something of which I committed to paper, in a blank note-book, which, with a pencil, I always had in my pocket. Thus, in order to divert my mind from the un-

foreseen discomforts of a condition which I had myself chosen, I became wholly devoted to literature, and consequently, in the first works I wrote, I introduced the peevishness and ill-humour which were the cause of my undertaking them.

There was another circumstance which contributed not a little to this: thrown into the world in despite of myself, without having its manners, or being in a situation to adopt and conform myself to them, I took it into my head to adopt others of my own, to enable me to dispense with those of society. My foolish timidity, which I could not conquer, having for principle the fear of being wanting in the common forms, I took, by way of encouraging myself, a resolution to tread them underfoot. I became sour and a cynic from shame, and affected to despise the politeness which I knew not how to practise. This austerity, conformable to my new principles, I must confess, seemed to ennoble itself in my mind; it assumed in my eyes the form of the intrepidity of virtue, and I dare assert it to be upon this noble basis that it supported itself longer and better than could have been expected from anything so contrary to my nature. Yet, notwithstanding I had the name of a misanthrope, which my exterior appearance and some happy expressions had given me in the world, it is certain that I never supported the character well in private; that my friends and acquaintance led this intractable bear about like a lamb; and that, confining my sarcasms to severe but general truths, I was never capable of saying an uncivil thing to any person whatsoever.

*Le Devin du Village* brought me completely into vogue, and presently after there was not a man in Paris whose company was more sought after than mine. The history of this piece, which is a kind of era in my life, is joined with that of the connections I had at that time. I must enter a little into particulars to make what is to follow the better understood.

I had a numerous acquaintance, yet no more than two friends, Diderot and Grimm. By an effect of the desire I have ever felt to unite everything that is dear to me, I was too much a friend to both not to make them shortly become so to each other. I connected them; they agreed well together, and shortly became more intimate with each other than with me. Diderot had a numerous acquaintance, but Grimm, a stranger and a new comer, had his to procure, and with the greatest pleasure I procured him all I could. I had already given him Diderot; I afterwards brought him acquainted with Gauffecourt. I introduced him to Madame de Chenonceaux, Madame d'Épinay, and the Baron d'Holbach: with the latter I had become connected almost in spite of myself. All my friends became his—this was natural; but not one of his ever became mine, which was inclining to the contrary. Whilst he yet lodged at the house of the Comte de Frièse, he frequently gave us dinners in his apartment, but I never received the least mark of friendship from the Comte de Frièse, the Comte de Schomberg, his relation—very familiar with Grimm,—nor from any other person, man or woman, with

whom Grimm, by their means, had any connection. I except the Abbé Raynal, who, although his friend, gave proofs of his being mine; and, in cases of need, offered me his purse with a generosity not very common. But I knew the Abbé Raynal long before Grimm had any acquaintance with him, and had entertained a great regard for him on account of his delicate and honourable behaviour to me upon a slight occasion, which I shall never forget.

The Abbe Raynal is certainly a warm friend: of this I saw a proof, much about the time of which I speak, with respect to Grimm himself, with whom he was very intimate. Grimm, after having been some time on a footing of friendship with Mademoiselle Fel, all at once fell violently in love with her, and wished to supplant Cahusac. The young lady, piquing herself on her constancy, refused her new admirer. He was thereupon seized with a kind of tragic grief, and made up his mind to die. He suddenly fell into the strangest state imaginable. He passed days and nights in a continued lethargy. He lay with his eyes open, and, although his pulse continued to beat regularly, without speaking, eating, or stirring; sometimes seeming to hear what was said to him, but never answering, not even by a sign, and remaining almost as immovable as if he had been dead, yet without agitation, pain, or fever. The Abbe Raynal and myself watched over him; the Abbé—more robust and in better health than I was—by night, and I by day, without both being ever absent at one time.

The Comte de Frièse was alarmed, and brought to him Senac, who, after having examined the state in which he was, said there was nothing to apprehend, and did not prescribe. My fears for my friend made me carefully observe the countenance of the physician, and I perceived him smile as he went away. However, the patient remained several days almost motionless, without taking broth, or anything except a few preserved cherries, which from time to time I put upon his tongue, and which he swallowed without difficulty. He one morning rose, dressed himself, and returned to his usual way of life, without either at that time, or afterwards, speaking to me or the Abbe Raynal—at least, that I know of,—or to any other person of this singular lethargy, or of the care we had taken of him during the time it lasted.

The affair did not fail to make a noise, and it would really have been a wonderful circumstance had the cruelty of an opera-singer made a man die of despair. This fine display of passion brought Grimm into vogue; he was soon considered as a prodigy in love, friendship, and attachments of every kind. Such an opinion made his company sought after, and procured him a good reception in the first circles; by which means he separated from me, with whom he never cared to associate when he could meet with anybody else. I perceived him to be on the point of breaking with me entirely; I was deeply grieved, for the lively and ardent sentiments of which he made a parade were those which, with less noise and pretension, I had

really conceived for him. I was glad of his success in the world ; but I did not wish him to obtain this by forgetting his friend. I one day said to him, 'Grimm, you neglect me, and I forgive you for it. When the first intoxication of your success is over, and you begin to perceive its emptiness, I hope you will return to your friend, whom you will always find the same. At present, do not constrain yourself ; I leave you at liberty to act as you please, and wait your leisure.' He said I was right, made his arrangements in consequence, and shook off all restraint, so that I saw no more of him except in company with our common friends.

Our chief rendezvous, before he was so closely connected with Madame d'Épinay as he afterwards became, was at the house of Baron d'Holbach. This said Baron was the son of a man who had raised himself from obscurity. His fortune was considerable, and he used it nobly, receiving at his house men of letters and merit ; and, by the knowledge he himself had acquired, was very worthy of holding a place amongst them. Having been long attached to Diderot, he endeavoured to become acquainted with me by his means, even before my name was known to the world. A natural repugnancy prevented me for a long time from responding to his advances. One day, when he asked me the reason of my unwillingness, I told him he was too rich. He was however resolved to carry his point, and at length succeeded. My greatest misfortune has always proceeded from my being unable to resist the force of



tolerable voice, sang well, and, although he did not read music, learned his part with great facility and precision. We passed our time in singing my Chenonceaux trios. To these I added two or three new ones, to the words which Grimm and the vicar wrote, well or ill. I cannot refrain from regretting these trios, composed and sung in moments of pure joy, and which I left at Wootton, with all my music. Mademoiselle Davenport has perhaps already turned them into curl-papers; but they are worthy of being preserved, and are, for the most part, of very good counterpoint. It was after one of these little excursions, in which I had the pleasure of seeing the 'aunt' at her ease and very cheerful, and in which my spirits were much enlivened, that I wrote to the vicar, very rapidly and very ill, an epistle in verse, which will be found amongst my papers.

I had nearer to Paris another station much to my liking with Monsieur Mussard, my countryman, relation, and friend, who at Passy had made himself a charming retreat, where I have passed some very peaceful moments. Monsieur Mussard was a jeweller, a man of good sense, who, after having acquired a fair fortune, had given his only daughter in marriage to Monsieur de Valmalette, the son of an exchange broker, and maître d'hôtel to the King, and took the wise precaution to quit business in his declining

which we were to dine at the Fontaine de Saint-Vandrille, I will let it pass; but when I thought of it afterwards, I concluded that he was then brooding in his heart the conspiracy which he has, with so much success, since carried into execution.—R.

years, and to place an interval of repose and enjoyment between the bustle and the end of life. The good man Mussard, a real philosopher in practice, lived without care, in a very pleasant house which he himself had built in a very pretty garden, laid out with his own hands. In digging the terraces of this garden he found fossil shells, and in such great quantities that his lively imagination saw nothing but shells in nature. He really thought the universe was composed of shells, or their broken fragments, and that the whole earth was only the sand of these. His attention being constantly engaged with this object and with his singular discoveries, his imagination became so heated with the ideas they gave him, that, in his head, they would soon have been converted into a system—that is, into a craze—if, happily for his reason, but unfortunately for his friends, to whom he was dear, and to whom his house was an agreeable asylum, a most cruel and extraordinary disease had not put an end to his existence. A constantly increasing tumour in his stomach prevented him from eating, long before the cause of it was discovered, and after several years of suffering absolutely occasioned him to die of hunger. I can never without the greatest affliction of mind call to my recollection the last moments of this worthy man, who still received with so much pleasure Lenieps and myself, the only friends whom the sight of his sufferings did not separate from him until his last hour, when he was reduced to devouring with his eyes the repasts he had placed before us, scarcely having the power

of swallowing a few drops of weak tea, which came up again a moment afterwards. But before these days of sorrow, how many have I passed at his house with the chosen friends he had made himself! At the head of the list I place the Abbé Prévost, a very amiable man and very sincere, whose heart vivified his writings, worthy of immortality, and who, neither in his disposition nor in society, had aught of the melancholy colouring he gave to his works; Procope the physician, a little Æsop, a favourite with the ladies; Boullanger, the celebrated posthumous author of *Le Despotisme Oriental*, and who, I am of opinion, extended the systems of Mussard on the duration of the world. The female part of his friends consisted of Madame Denis, niece to Voltaire, who at that time was nothing more than a good kind of woman, and pretended not to wit: Madame Vanloo, certainly not handsome, but charming, and who sang like an angel; Madame de Valmalette herself, who sang also, and who, although very thin, would have been very attractive had she had fewer pretensions. Such, or very nearly such, was the society of Monsieur Mussard, with which I should have been much pleased, had not his *conchylomania* more engaged my attention; and I can say, with great truth, that for upwards of six months I worked with him in his cabinet with as much pleasure as he felt himself.

He had long insisted upon the virtues of the waters of Passy, as being proper in my case, and recommended me to come to his house to drink them. To withdraw myself from the tumult

of the city, I at length consented, and went to pass eight or ten days at Passy, which on account of my being in the country were of more service to me than the waters I drank during my stay there. Mussard played the violoncello, and was passionately fond of Italian music. This was the subject of a long conversation we had one evening after supper, particularly the *opere buffe* we had both seen in Italy, and with which we were highly delighted. My sleep having forsaken me in the night, I considered in what manner it would be possible to give in France an idea of this kind of drama, for *Les Amours de Ragonde*<sup>1</sup> did not in the least resemble it. In the morning, whilst I took my walk and drank the waters, I hastily put together a few couplets to which I adapted such airs as occurred to me at the moment. I scribbled over what I had composed in a kind of vaulted saloon at the end of the garden; and at tea I could not refrain from showing the airs to Mussard and to Mademoiselle Duvernois, his housekeeper, who was a very good and amiable girl. The three pieces of composition which I had sketched out were the first monologue, 'J'ai perdu mon serviteur'; the air of the Devin, 'L'amour croît s'il s'inquiète'; and the last duo, 'A jamais, Colin, je t'engage,' etc. I was so far from thinking it worth while to continue what I had begun, that had it not been for the applause and encouragement I received from both, I should

<sup>1</sup> A musical comedy, by Néricault Destouches, the music composed by Mouret. It was produced in 1742.

have thrown my papers into the fire and thought no more of their contents, as I had frequently done by things of much the same merit ; but I was so excited by praise, that in six days my drama, excepting a few couplets, was written. The music also was so far sketched out that all I had further to do to it after my return from Paris was to compose a little of the recitative, and to add the middle parts, the whole of which I finished with so much rapidity that in three weeks my work was ready for representation. The only thing now wanting was the divertissement, which was not composed until a long time afterwards.

[1752.] My imagination was so warmed by the composition of this work, that I had the strongest desire to hear it performed, and would have given anything to have seen and heard the whole in the manner I should have chosen, with closed doors, as Lully is said to have had *Armide* performed for himself only. As it was not possible for me to have this pleasure unaccompanied by the public, I could not see the effect of my piece without getting it received at the Opera. Unfortunately it was quite a new species of composition, to which the ears of the public were not accustomed ; and, besides, the ill success of *Les Muses Galantes* gave me too much reason to fear for *Le Devin*, if I presented it in my own name. Duclos relieved me from this difficulty, and engaged to get the piece rehearsed without mentioning the author.

That I might not discover myself, I did not go to the rehearsal, and the Petits Violons,<sup>1</sup> by whom it was directed, knew not who the author was until after a general plaudit had attested the merit of the work. Everybody present was so delighted with it that, on the next day, nothing else was spoken of in various circles. Monsieur de Cury, Intendant des Menus, who was present at the rehearsal, demanded the piece for performance at Court. Duclos, who knew my intentions, and thought I should be less master of my work at the Court than at Paris, refused to give it. Cury claimed it authoritatively; Duclos persisted in his refusal; and the dispute between them was carried to such a length that one day they would have gone out from the Opera House together, had they not been separated. It was thought right to apply to me; I referred the decision to Monsieur Duclos. This made it necessary to return to him. Monsieur le Duc d'Aumont interfered; and at length Duclos thought proper to yield to authority, and the piece was given to be played at Fontainebleau.

The part to which I had been most attentive, and in which I had kept at the greatest distance from the common track, was the recitative. Mine was accented in a manner entirely new, and accompanied the utterance of the word. The directors dared not suffer this horrid innovation to pass, lest it should shock the ears of persons who never judge for themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> The title given to Rebel and Francœur, who, when they were very young, acquired a reputation in going together from house to house playing on the violin —R

Another recitative by Francueil and Jelyotte was proposed, to which I consented, but refused at the same time to have anything to do with it myself.

When everything was ready and the day of performance fixed, a proposition was made to me to go to Fontainebleau, that I might at least be present at the last rehearsal. I went with Mademoiselle Fel, Grimm, and I think the Abbé Raynal, in a Court carriage. The rehearsal was tolerable: I was more satisfied with it than I had expected to be. The orchestra was numerous, composed of the musicians of the Opéra and the King's band. Jelyotte played Colin; Mademoiselle Fel, Colette; Cuvilier, the Devin; the choruses were those of the Opéra. I said but little. Jelyotte had prepared everything; I was unwilling to play the master over him; and, notwithstanding I had assumed the air of an old Roman, I was, in the midst of so many people, as bashful as a schoolboy.

The next morning, the day of performance, I went to breakfast at the Café du Grand Commun, where I found a great number of people. The rehearsal of the preceding evening, and the difficulty of getting into the theatre, were the subjects of conversation. An officer present said that he had entered with the greatest ease, gave a long account of what had passed, described the author, and related what he had said and done; but what astonished me most in this long narrative, given with ~~as~~ much assurance as simplicity, was that it did not contain a syllable of truth. It was clear to me

that he who spoke so positively of the rehearsal had not been at it, because, without knowing him, he had before his eyes that author whom he said he had seen so plainly. What was most singular in this scene was its effect upon me. The officer was a man rather in years; he had nothing of the appearance of a fool or upstart; his features appeared to announce a man of merit, and his cross of Saint-Louis an officer of long standing. He interested me in spite of myself, notwithstanding his impudence. Whilst he uttered his lies, I blushed, looked down, and sat upon thorns. I at times endeavoured within myself to find the means of believing him to be in an involuntary error. At length, trembling lest some person should know me, and by this means affront him, I hastily drank my chocolate, without saying a word, and, holding down my head as I passed before him, got out of the coffee-house as soon as possible, whilst the company were making their remarks upon the relation that he had given. I was no sooner in the street than I found myself in a perspiration, and, had anybody known and named me before I left the room, I am certain all the shame and embarrassment of a guilty person would have appeared in my countenance, proceeding from what I felt the poor man would have had to suffer had his lie been discovered.

I now come to one of the critical moments of my life, in which it is difficult to do anything more than to relate, because it is almost impossible that even narrative should not carry with it the marks of censure or apology. I will,



however, endeavour to relate how and from what motives I acted, without adding either approbation or blame.

I was on that day in the same careless undress as usual, with a great beard and a wig badly combed. Considering this want of decency as an act of courage, I entered in this guise the theatre wherein the King, Queen, the Royal family, and the whole Court were to enter immediately after. I was conducted to a box by Monsieur de Cury, one which belonged to him. It was very spacious, upon the stage, and opposite to a lesser but more elevated one, in which the King sat with Madame de Pompadour. As I was surrounded by ladies, and the only man in front of the box, I had no doubt of my having been placed there purposely to be exposed to view. As soon as the theatre was lighted up, finding I was in the midst of people all extremely well dressed, I began to be less at my ease, and asked myself if I was in my place, and whether I was properly dressed. After a few minutes of inquietude, 'Yes,' I mentally replied, with an intrepidity which perhaps proceeded more from the impossibility of retracting than the force of all my reasoning, 'I am in my place, because I am to see my own piece performed, to which I have been invited ; because I have composed it to that end ; and because, after all, no person has a greater right than I to reap the fruit of my labour and talents. I am dressed as usual, neither better nor worse ; and, if I again begin to subject myself to opinion in anything, I shall shortly become a slave to it in everything. To

be always consistent with myself, I ought not to blush, in any place whatever, at being dressed in a manner suitable to the state I have chosen. My exterior appearance is simple, but neither dirty nor slovenly; nor is a beard either of these in itself, because it is given us by nature, and, according to time, place, and custom, is sometimes an ornament. People will think I am ridiculous—nay, even absurd; but what signifies this to me? I ought to know how to bear censure and ridicule, provided I do not deserve them.’ After this little soliloquy, I became so firm that, had it been necessary, I could have been intrepid. But, whether it was the effect of the presence of his Majesty or the natural disposition of those about me, I perceived nothing but what was civil and obliging in the curiosity of which I was the object. This so much affected me, that I began to be uneasy for myself and the fate of my piece, fearing I should efface favourable prejudices which seemed to lead to nothing but applause. I was armed against raillery, but so far overcome by kind treatment which I had not expected, that I trembled like a child when the performance began.

I soon had sufficient reason to be encouraged. The piece was very ill played with respect to the actors, but the musical part was well sung and executed. During the first scene, which is really of a delightful simplicity, I heard in the boxes a murmur of surprise and applause hitherto unknown in connection with pieces of the same kind. The fermentation was soon

increased to such a degree as to be perceptible through the whole audience, and, to speak after the manner of Montesquieu, the effect went on augmenting by its own force. In the scene between the two good little folks, this effect was complete. There is no clapping of hands before the King; therefore everything was heard, which was advantageous to the author and the piece. I heard about me a whispering of women, who appeared as beautiful as angels. They said to each other in a low voice, 'This is charming! that is ravishing! There is not a sound which does not go to the heart!' The pleasure of giving this emotion to so many amiable persons moved me to tears; and these I could not contain in the first duo, when I remarked that I was not the only person who wept. I checked myself for a moment, on recollecting the concert of Monsieur de Tretorens. This reminiscence had the effect of the slave who held the crown over the head of the triumphant general; but my reflection was short, and I soon abandoned myself without interruption to the pleasure of enjoying my success. However, I am certain the voluptuousness of the sex was more predominant than the vanity of the author, and, had none but men been present, I certainly should not have had the incessant desire I felt of catching on my lips the delicious tears I had caused to flow. I have known pieces excite more lively admiration, but I never saw so complete, delightful, and affecting an intoxication of the senses reign, during a whole representation, especially at Court, and

at a first performance. Those who saw this must recollect it, for it has never yet been equalled.

The same evening Monsieur le Duc d'Aumont sent to desire me to be at the palace the next day at eleven o'clock, when he would present me to the King. Monsieur de Cury, who delivered me the message, added that he thought a pension was intended, and that the King wished to announce it to me himself.

Will it be believed that the night following so brilliant a day was for me a night of anguish and perplexity? My first idea, after that of this performance, was concerned with my frequently wanting to retire; this had made me suffer very considerably at the theatre, and might torment me the next day when I should be in the gallery, or in the King's apartment, amongst all the great, waiting for the passing of his Majesty. This infirmity was the principal cause which prevented me from mixing in polite companies, and shutting myself up in female society. The idea alone of the situation in which this want might place me was sufficient to produce it, to such a degree as to make me feel sick, if I would not adopt a mode of relief to which death was preferable in my eyes. None but persons who are acquainted with this situation can judge of the horror which being exposed to the risk of it inspires.

I then supposed myself before the King, presented to his Majesty, who deigned to stop and speak to me. In this situation, justness of expression and presence of mind were peculiarly neces-

sary in answering. Would my accursed timidity, which disconcerts me in the presence of any stranger whatever, have been shaken off in the presence of the King of France; or would it have suffered me instantly to make choice of proper expressions? I wished, without laying aside the austere manner I had adopted, to show myself sensible of the honour done me by so great a monarch, and in a merited eulogium to convey some great and useful truth. I could not prepare a suitable answer without exactly knowing what his Majesty was to say to me; and had this been the case, I was certain that, in his presence, I should not recollect a word of what I had previously meditated. What, said I, will become of me in this moment, and before the whole court, if, in my confusion, one of my usual ill-timed phrases should escape me? This danger alarmed and terrified me; I trembled to such a degree that at all events I was determined not to expose myself to it.

I was thus losing, it is true, the pension which in some measure was offered me, but was at the same time exempting myself from the yoke it would have imposed. Adieu truth, liberty, and courage! How should I afterwards have dared to speak of disinterestedness and independence? Had I received the pension, I must either have become a flatterer or remained silent; and, moreover, who would have insured to me the payment of it? What steps should I have been under the necessity of taking! How many people must I have solicited! I should have had more trouble and anxious cares

in preserving than in doing without it. Therefore, I thought I acted according to my principles by refusing, and sacrificing appearances to reality. I communicated my resolution to Grimm, who said nothing against it. To others I alleged my ill state of health, and left the court in the morning.

My departure made some noise, and was generally condemned. My reasons could not be known to everybody ; it was, therefore, easy to accuse me of foolish pride, and thus gratify the jealousy of such as felt that they would not have acted as I had done. The next day Jelyotte wrote me a note, in which he stated the success of my piece, and the pleasure it had afforded the King. 'All day long,' said he, 'his Majesty sings, with the worst voice in his kingdom, 'J'ai perdu mon serviteur ; j'ai perdu tout mon bonheur.' He likewise added that in a fortnight or so *Le Devin* was to be performed a second time, which would confirm in the eyes of the public the complete success of the first representation.

Two days afterwards, about nine o'clock in the evening, as I was going to sup with Madame d'Épinay, I perceived a hackney coach pass by the door. Somebody within made a sign to me to take a seat. I did so, and found the person to be Diderot. He spoke of the pension with more warmth than, upon such a subject, I should have expected from a philosopher. He did not blame me for having been unwilling to be presented to the King, but severely reproached me with my indifference about the pension. He

observed that, although on my own account I might be disinterested, I ought not to be so on that of Madame Le Vasseur and her daughter ; that it was my duty to seize every means of providing for their subsistence ; and that as, after all, it could not be said I had refused the pension, he maintained I ought, since the King seemed disposed to grant it to me, to solicit and obtain it by one means or another. Although I was obliged to him for his good wishes, I could not relish his maxims, which produced a warm dispute—the first I ever had with him. All our disputes were of this kind, he prescribing to me what he pretended I ought to do, and I defending myself because I was of a different opinion.

It was late when we parted. I would have taken him to supper at Madame d'Épinay's, but he refused to go ; and, notwithstanding all the efforts which at different times the desire of uniting those I love induced me to make to prevail upon him to see her, even that of conducting her to his door, which he kept shut against us, he constantly declined, and never spoke of her but with the utmost contempt. It was not until after I had quarrelled with both that they became acquainted, and that he began to speak honourably of her.

From this time Diderot and Grimm seemed to have resolved to alienate the *gouverneuses* from me, by giving them to understand that if they were not in easy circumstances the fault was mine, and that they would never make any progress with me. They endeavoured to pre-

vail on them to leave me, promising them a privilege for retailing salt, a tobacco-shop, and I know not what other advantages, through the influence of Madame d'Épinay. They likewise wished to gain over Duclos and D'Holbach, but the former constantly refused their proposals. I had at the time some intimation of what was going forward, but I was not fully acquainted with the whole until long afterwards ; and I frequently had reason to lament the effects of the blind and indiscreet zeal of my friends, who, in my ill state of health, striving to reduce me to the most melancholy solitude, endeavoured, as they imagined, to render me happy by the means which, of all others, were the most likely to make me miserable.

[1753.] In the following Carnival (1753) *Le Devin* was performed at Paris, and in the interval I had sufficient time to compose the overture and the divertissement. This divertissement, such as it is printed, was to be in action from beginning to end, and in a continued subject, which, in my opinion, afforded very agreeable tableaux. But, when I proposed this idea at the Opera House, nobody would so much as hearken to me, and I was obliged to tack together music and dances in the usual manner. On this account the divertissement, although full of charming ideas, which did not diminish the beauty of the scenes, had but a slight success. I suppressed the recitative of Jélyotte, and substituted my own, such as I had first composed it, and as it is now printed ;



and this recitative—a little after the French manner, I confess, drawled out, instead of pronounced by the actors—far from shocking the ears of any person, succeeded equally with the airs, and seemed in the judgment of the public to possess as much musical merit. I dedicated my piece to Duclos, who had given it his protection, and I declared that this should be my only dedication. I have, however, with his consent, written a second; but he must have felt more honoured by the exception than if I had not written a dedication to any person.

I could relate many anecdotes concerning the piece, but things of greater importance prevent me from entering into a detail of them at present. I shall perhaps resume the subject in a supplement. There is, however, one which I cannot omit, as it relates to the greater part of what is to follow. I was one day examining Baron d'Holbach's music in his cabinet. After having looked over many different kinds, he said, showing me a collection of pieces for the harpsichord, 'These were composed for me; they are full of taste and harmony, and quite unknown to anybody but myself. You ought to make a selection of one for your divertissement.' Having in my head more subjects of airs and symphonies than I could make use of, I was not anxious to have any of his. However, he pressed me so much that, from a motive of complaisance, I chose a pastoral, which I abridged and converted into a trio, for the entry of the companions of Colette. Some months afterwards, and whilst *Le Devin* still continued

to be performed, calling upon Grimm I found several people about his harpsichord, whence he hastily rose on my arrival. As I accidentally looked towards his music-stand, I there saw the same collection of the Baron d'Holbach, opened precisely at the piece that he had prevailed upon me to take, assuring me at the same time that it should never go out of his hands. Some time afterwards I again saw this collection open on the harpsichord of Monsieur d'Épinay one day when he gave a little concert. Neither Grimm nor anybody else ever spoke to me of this air, and my reason for mentioning it here is that some time afterwards a rumour was spread that I was not the author of *Le Devin du Village*. As I never made great progress in the mere mechanism of the art, I am persuaded that, had it not been for my *Dictionnaire de Musique*; it would in the end have been said that I did not understand it.<sup>1</sup>

Some time before *Le Devin du Village* was performed, a company of Italian *boriffons* had arrived at Paris, and were ordered to perform at the Opera House, without the effect that they would produce there being foreseen. Although they were detestable, and the orchestra, at that time very ignorant, mutilated at will the pièces they gave, they did not fail to inflict on French opera an injury that will never be repaired. The comparison of these two kinds of music, heard the same evening in the same theatre, opened the ears of the French. Nobody could

<sup>1</sup> I little suspected, too, that this would be said of me, notwithstanding my *Dictionnaire*.—R.

endure their languid music after the marked lively accents of Italian composition; and the moment the *bouffons* had done everybody went away. The managers were obliged to change the order of representation, and let the performance of the *bouffons* be the last. *Eglé*, *Pygmalion*, and *Le Sylphe*, were successively given: nothing could bear the comparison. The *Devin du Village* was the only piece that did it, and this was still relished after *La Serva Padrona*. When I composed my interlude, my head was filled with these pieces, and they gave me the first idea of it. I was, however, far from imagining they would one day be passed in review by the side of my composition. Had I been a plagiarist, how many pilferings would have been manifest, and what care would have been taken to point them out to the public! But I had done nothing of the kind. All attempts to discover any such thing were fruitless; nothing was found in my music which led to the recollection of that of any other person, and my whole composition, compared with the pretended originals, was found to be as new as the musical characters I had invented. Had Mondonville or Rameau undergone the same ordeal, they would have lost much of their substance.

The *bouffons* acquired for Italian music very warm partisans. All Paris was divided into two parties, the violence of which was greater than if an affair of state or religion had been in question. One of them, the more powerful and numerous, composed of the great, of men

of fortune, and the ladies, supported French music; the other, more lively and confident, and fuller of enthusiasm, was composed of real connoisseurs, and men of talents and genius. This little group assembled at the Opera House, under the box belonging to the Queen. The other party filled up the rest of the pit and the theatre; but the heads were mostly assembled under the box of his Majesty. Hence the party names of 'Coin du Roi,' 'Coin de la Reine,' then in great celebrity. The dispute, as it became more animated, produced several pamphlets. The King's corner aimed at pleasantry; it was laughed at by *Le Petit Prophète*. It attempted to reason; the *Lettre sur la Musique Française* refuted its reasoning. These two little productions, the former of which was by Grimm, the latter by myself, are the only ones which have outlived the quarrel; all the rest are forgotten.

But *Le Petit Prophète*, which, notwithstanding all I could say, was for a long time attributed to me, was considered as a pleasantry, and did not produce the least inconvenience to the author: whereas the *Lettre sur la Musique* was taken seriously, and incensed against me the whole nation, which thought itself offended by this attack on its music. The description of the incredible effect of this pamphlet would be worthy of the pen of Tacitus. The great quarrel between the Parliament and the clergy was then at its height. The Parliament had just been exiled; the fermentation was general; everything announced an approaching insurrec-

tion. The pamphlet appeared; from that moment every other quarrel was forgotten; the perilous state of French music was the only thing by which the attention of the public was engaged, and the only insurrection was against myself. This was so general that it has never since been entirely calmed. At court, the Bastille or banishment was absolutely determined on, and a *lettre de cachet* would have been issued had not Monsieur de Voyer clearly shown that such a step would be ridiculous. Were I to say this pamphlet probably prevented a revolution, the reader would imagine I was in a dream. It is, however, a fact, the truth of which all Paris can attest, it being no more than fifteen years since the date of this singular incident.

Although no attempts were made on my liberty, I suffered numerous insults, and even my life was in danger. The musicians of the Opera orchestra humanely resolved to murder me as I went out of the theatre. Of this I received information; but the only effect it produced on me was to make me more assiduously attend the Opera: and I did not learn until a considerable time afterwards that Monsieur Ancelet, officer in the Mousquetaires, and who had a friendship for me, had prevented the effect of this conspiracy by giving me an escort, which, unknown to myself, accompanied me on my departure. The direction of the Opera House had just been given to the municipality. The first exploit performed by the Prévôt des Marchands was to take from me my freedom of

the theatre, and this in the most uncivil manner possible. Admission was publicly refused me on my presenting myself, so that I was obliged to take an amphitheatre ticket, that I might not that evening have the mortification to return as I had come. This injustice was the more shameful, as the only price I had set on my piece when I gave it to the managers was a perpetual freedom of the house; for although this was a right common to every author, and which I enjoyed under a double title, I especially stipulated for it in presence of Monsieur Duclos. It is true that the treasurer brought me fifty louis, for which I had not asked; but, besides the smallness of the sum, compared with that which, according to the rules established in such cases, was due to me, this payment had nothing in common with the right of entry formally granted; and which was entirely independent of it. There was in this behaviour such a complication of iniquity and brutality, that the public, notwithstanding its animosity against me, which was then at its height, was universally shocked at it, and many persons who had insulted me on the preceding evening, the next day exclaimed in the open theatre that it was shameful thus to deprive an author of his right of entry, and particularly one who had so well deserved it, and was entitled to claim it for himself and another person. So true is the Italian proverb: 'Ogn'un ama la giustizia in cosa d'altrui.'

In this situation the only thing I had to do was to demand my work, since the price I had

agreed to receive for it was refused me. For this purpose I wrote to Monsieur d'Argenson, who attended to this department of the Opéra. I likewise enclosed to him a memoir which was unanswerable ; but this, as well as my letter, were ineffectual, and I received no answer to either. The silence of that unjust man hurt me extremely, and did not contribute to increase the very moderate good opinion I always had of his character and abilities. It was in this manner that the managers kept my piece, while they deprived me of the price for which I had given it them. From the weak to the strong, such an act would be a theft ; from the strong to the weak, it is only an appropriation of another's property.

With respect to the pecuniary advantages of the work, although it did not produce me a fourth part of the sum it would have brought to any other person, they were considerable enough to enable me to subsist several years, and to make amends for the ill-success of copying, which went on but very slowly. I received a hundred louis from the King ; fifty from Madame de Pompadour, for the performance at Bellevue, where she herself played the part of Colin ; fifty from the Opéra ; and five hundred francs from Pissot for the engraving ; so that this interlude, which cost me no more than five or six weeks' application, produced, notwithstanding the ill-treatment I received and my own stupidity, almost as much money as I have since obtained by my *Émile*, which had cost me twenty years' meditation and three years' labour. But I paid

dearly for the pecuniary ease I received from the piece, by the infinite vexations it brought upon me. It was the germ of the secret jealousies which did not break out until a long time afterwards. After its success I did not remark, either in Grimm, Diderot, or any of the men of letters with whom I was acquainted, the same cordiality and frankness, nor that pleasure in seeing me, which I had previously experienced. The moment I appeared at the Baron's, the conversation was no longer general. The company divided into small parties, whispered into each other's ears, and I remained alone, without knowing to whom to address myself. I endured for a long time this mortifying neglect; and, perceiving that Madame d'Holbach, who was mild and amiable, still received me well, I bore with the vulgarity of her husband as long as it was possible. But he one day attacked me without reason or pretence, and with such brutality, in presence of Diderot, who said not a word, and Margency, who since that time has often told me how much he admired the moderation and mildness of my answers, that, at length driven from his house by this unworthy treatment, I went away with a resolution never to enter it again. This did not, however, prevent me from always speaking honourably of him and his house, whilst he continually expressed himself relative to me in the most insulting terms, calling me that *petit cuistre*, without, however, being able to charge me with having done either to himself or any person to whom he was attached the most trifling injury. In this manner he verified



my predictions and fears. I am of opinion that my pretended friends would have pardoned me for having written books, and even excellent ones, because this merit was not foreign to themselves, but that they could not forgive my writing an opera, nor the brilliant success it had, because there was not one of them capable of entering the same path, nor in a situation to aspire to like honours. Duclos, the only person superior to this jealousy, seemed to have become more attached to me. He introduced me to Mademoiselle Quinault, in whose house I received polite attention and civility to as great an extreme as I had found the reverse in that of Monsieur d'Holbach.

Whilst the performance of *Le Devin du Village* was continued at the Opera House, negotiations with its composer were opened—though less happily—at the Comedie Française. Not having, during seven or eight years, been able to get my *Narcisse* performed at the Italiens, I had, by the bad performance in French of the actors, become disgusted with it, and would rather have had my piece received at the Français than by them. I mentioned this to La Noue, the comedian, with whom I had become acquainted, and who, as everybody knows, was a man of merit and an author. He was pleased with the piece, and promised to get it performed without suffering the author's name to be known, and in the meantime procured me the freedom of the theatre, which was extremely agreeable to me, for I always preferred the Théâtre Français to the two others. The piece was favourably received, and without the

author's name being mentioned ; but I have reason to believe it was known to the actors and actresses, and many other persons. Mesdemoiselles Gaussin and Grandval played the amorous girls ; and, although the whole performance, in my opinion, lacked intelligence, the piece could not be said to be absolutely ill played. Nevertheless, the indulgence of the public, for which I was grateful, surprised me ; the audience had the patience to listen to it from beginning to end, and to endure a second representation without showing the least sign of disapprobation. For my part, I was so wearied with the first that I could not hold out to the end ; and leaving the theatre I went into the Cafe de Procope, where I found Boissy and others of my acquaintance, who had probably been as much bored as myself. I there frankly cried *peccavi*, humbly or haughtily avowing myself the author of the piece, and judging it as everybody else had done. This public avowal by the author of a bad piece was much admired, and was by no means painful to myself. My self-love, indeed, was flattered by the courage with which I made it, and I am of opinion that on this occasion there was more pride in speaking than there would have been foolish shame in being silent. However, as it was certain the piece, although frigid in the performance, would bear to be read, I had it printed ; and in the preface, which I account well written, I began to make my principles more public than I had hitherto done.

I soon had an opportunity to explain them

entirely in a work of the greatest importance ; for it was, I think, in this year 1753 that the programme of the Academy of Dijon upon the 'Origin of Inequality amongst Mankind' made its appearance. Struck with this great question, I was surprised that the Academy had dared to propose it ; but, since it had shown sufficient courage to do it, I thought I might well venture to treat it, and undertook the discussion.

That I might meditate on this grand subject more at my ease, I went to Saint-Germain for seven or eight days with Thérèse ; our hostess, who was a good kind of woman ; and one of her female friends. I consider this walk as one of the most agreeable that I ever took. The weather was very fine ; these good women took upon themselves all the care and expense ; Thérèse amused herself with them ; and I, free from all domestic concerns, diverted myself, without restraint, at meal-times. All the rest of the day, wandering in the forest, I sought for and found there the image of the primitive ages of which I boldly traced the history. I confounded the pitiful lies of men ; I dared to unveil their nature ; to follow the progress of time, and the things by which nature has been disfigured ; and, comparing self-made man with natural man, to show him, in his pretended improvement, the real source of his miseries. My mind, elevated by these sublime contemplations, ascended to the Divinity, and thence, seeing my fellow-creatures follow in the blind track of their prejudices that of their errors, their misfortunes, and their crimes, I exclaimed to

them, in a feeble voice, which they could not hear : Madmen, who continually cry out against nature ! know that all your evils proceed from yourselves !.

From these meditations resulted *Le Discours sur l'Inégalité*, a work more to the taste of Diderot than any of my other writings, and respecting which his advice was of the greatest service to me.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, understood by few readers throughout all Europe, and not one of these would ever speak of it. I had written it to become a competitor for the prize, but sent it away fully persuaded that it would not obtain it, well convinced that it was not for productions of this nature that the rewards of academies were founded.

This excursion and this occupation enlivened my spirits and were of service to my health. Several years before, tormented by my disorder, I had given myself up entirely to the care of physicians, who, without alleviating my sufferings, exhausted my strength, and destroyed my constitution. At my return from Saint-

<sup>1</sup> At the time I wrote this I had not the least suspicion of the grand conspiracy of Diderot and Grimm, otherwise I should easily have discovered how much the former abused my confidence, by giving to my writings that severity and moroseness which were not to be found in them from the moment he ceased to direct me. The passage of the philosopher who argues with himself, and stops his ears against the pleading of a man in distress, is after his manner ; and he furnished me with others still more extraordinary, which I could never resolve to make use of. But, attributing this moroseness to the tone which he had acquired in the donjon of Vincennes, and of which there is a very sufficient dose in his *Clairval*, I never once suspected the least unfriendly dealing.—R.

Germain, I found myself stronger and perceived my health to be improved. I followed this indication, and, determined to recover or die without the aid of physicians and medicine, I bade them adieu for ever, and lived from day to day, keeping close when I found myself indisposed, and going abroad when I had sufficient strength. The manner of living in Paris amidst people of pretensions was so little to my liking; the cabals of men of letters, their undignified quarrels, the little candour in their writings, and the air of importance they gave themselves in the world, were so odious, so opposite, to me; I found so little mildness, openness of heart, and frankness in the intercourse even of my friends, that, disgusted with this life of tumult, I began ardently to long to reside in the country, and, perceiving that my occupation would not permit me to do it, I went to pass there all the time I had to spare. For several months I went directly after dinner to walk alone in the Bois de Boulogne, meditating on subjects for future works, and not returning until evening.

[1754-1756.] Gauffecourt, with whom I was at that time extremely intimate, being on account of his employment obliged to go to Geneva, proposed to me the journey, to which I consented. The state of my health was such as to require the cares of the *gouverneuse*; it was therefore decided that she should accompany us, and that her mother should take charge of the house. After thus having made our arrangements, we set off all three on the 1st of June 1754.

I must take particular note of this journey as the epoch of the first experience which, until that time, when I was forty-two years of age, severely wounded the free and confiding nature with which I was born, and to which I had abandoned myself without reserve or inconvenience. We had an ordinary travelling carriage, in which with the same horses we progressed by very short stages. I frequently got out and walked. We had scarcely performed half our journey when Thérèse showed the greatest repugnance to being left in the carriage with Gauffecourt; and when, notwithstanding her remonstrances, I would get out as usual, she insisted upon doing the same, and walking with me. I chided her for this caprice, and so strongly opposed it that at length she found herself obliged to declare to me the cause. I thought I was in a dream, my astonishment was beyond expression, when I learned that my friend Monsieur de Gauffecourt, upwards of sixty years of age, crippled by the gout, impotent and exhausted by pleasures, had, since our departure, incessantly endeavoured to corrupt a person who belonged to his friend, and was no longer young nor handsome, by the most base and shameful means, such as presenting to her a purse, attempting to inflame her imagination by the reading of an abominable book, and by the sight of infamous pictures with which it was filled. Thérèse, full of indignation, once threw his scandalous book out of the carriage; and I learned that, on the first evening of our journey, a violent headache having obliged me to retire

to bed before supper, he had employed the whole time of this *tête-à-tête* in actions more worthy of a satyr than a man of worth and honour, to whom I had intrusted my companion and myself. What astonishment and hitherto unfelt grief of heart for me ! I, who until then had believed friendship to be inseparable from every amiable and noble sentiment which constitutes all its charm, for the first time in my life found myself under the necessity of connecting it with disdain, and of withdrawing my confidence and esteem from a man for whom I had an affection, and by whom I imagined myself beloved ! The wretch concealed from me his turpitude ; and, that I might not expose Thérèse, I was obliged to conceal from him my contempt, and secretly to harbour in my heart sentiments foreign to its nature. Sweet and sacred illusion of friendship ! Gauffecourt first took thy veil from before my eyes. What cruel hands have since that time prevented it from again being drawn over them !

At Lyons I quitted Gauffecourt to take the road through Savoy, being unable again to be so near Mamma without seeing her. I saw her—good God, in what a situation ! How contemptible ! What remained to her of primitive virtue ? Was it the same Madame de Warens, formerly so gay and lively, to whom the Curé Pontverre had given me recommendations ? How my heart was wounded ! The only resource I saw for her was to quit the country. I earnestly, but vainly, repeated the invitation I had several times given her in my letters to come and live peacefully with me, assuring her

I would dedicate the rest of my life, and that of Thérèse, to render hers happy. Attached to her pension, from which, although it was regularly paid, she had not for a long time received the least advantage, she would not listen to me. I again gave her a trifling part of the contents of my purse, much less than I ought to have done, and considerably less than I should have offered her had I not been certain of its not being of the least service to herself. During my residence at Geneva she made a journey into Chablais, and came to see me at Grange-Canal. She was in want of money to continue her journey : what I had in my pocket was insufficient to this purpose, but an hour afterwards I sent it her by Thérèse. Poor Mamma ! I must relate this proof of the goodness of her heart. A little ring was the last jewel she had left. She took it from her finger to put it upon that of Thérèse, who instantly replaced it upon that whence it had been taken, kissing the generous hand which she bathed with her tears. Ah ! this was the proper moment to discharge my debt ! I should have abandoned everything to follow her, and share her fate, let it be what it would, till death. I did nothing of the kind. Engaged by another attachment, I found my sentiments towards her abated by the slender hopes that remained of being useful to her. I sighed after her, but I did not follow her. Of all the remorse I ever felt, this was the strongest and most lasting. I merited thereby the terrible chastisements with which I have since that time been incessantly over-



whelmed : may these have expiated my ingratitude ! Of this I appear guilty in my conduct, but my heart has been too much torn by what I did ever to have been that of an ingrate.

Before my departure from Paris I had sketched out the dedication of my *Discours sur l'Inégalité*. I finished it at Chamberi, and dated it from that place, thinking that, to avoid all chicanery, it was better not to date it either from France or Geneva. When I arrived in that city I abandoned myself to the republican enthusiasm which had brought me to it. This was augmented by the reception I there met with. Treated with extreme kindness by persons of every description, I gave myself up entirely to patriotic zeal, and, mortified at being excluded from the rights of a citizen by the profession of a religion different from that of my forefathers, I resolved openly to return to the latter. I thought that the Gospel being the same for every Christian, and the only difference in religious opinions the result of the explanations given by men to that which they did not understand, it was the exclusive right of the sovereign power in every country to fix the mode of worship, and these unintelligible dogmas ; and that consequently it was the duty of a citizen to admit the one and conform to the other in the manner prescribed by the law. Conversation with the Encyclopædists, far from staggering my faith, gave it new strength by my natural aversion to disputes and party. The study of man and the universe had everywhere shown me the final causes and the wisdom by

which they were directed. The reading of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament, to which I had for several years past applied myself, had given me a sovereign contempt for the base and stupid interpretations given to the words of Jesus Christ by persons the least worthy of understanding Him. In a word, philosophy, while it attached me to the essential part of religion, had detached me from the trash of the little formularies with which men had obscured it. Judging that for a reasonable man there were not two ways of being a Christian, I was also of opinion that in each country everything relative to form and discipline was within the jurisdiction of the laws. From this principle, so social and pacific, and which has brought upon me such cruel persecutions, it followed that, desiring to be a citizen, I must become a Protestant, and conform anew to the mode of worship established in my country. This I resolved upon; I moreover put myself under the instructions of the pastor of the parish in which I lived, and which was without the city. All I desired was not to appear at the Consistory. However, the ecclesiastical edict was expressly to that effect; but it was agreed upon to dispense with it in my favour, and a commission of five or six members was named to receive in private my profession of faith. Unfortunately the Minister Perdriau, a mild and an amiable man, with whom I was on friendly terms, took it into his head to tell me the members were rejoiced at the thoughts of hearing me speak in the little assembly. This

expectation alarmed me to such a degree that, having during three weeks studied night and day a little discourse that I had prepared, I was so confused when I ought to have pronounced it that I could not utter a single word, and during the conference I had the appearance of the most stupid schoolboy. The persons deputed spoke for me, and I answered yes and no, like a blockhead ; I was afterwards admitted to the communion, and reinstated in my rights as a citizen. I was enrolled as such in the list of guards, paid by none but citizens and burgesses, and I attended at a council-general extraordinary to receive the oath from the Syndic Mussard. I was so impressed with the kindness shown me on this occasion by the Council and the Consistory, and by the great civility and obliging behaviour of the magistrates, ministers, and citizens, that, pressed by the worthy Deluc, who was incessant in his persuasions, and still more so by my own inclination, I did not think of going back to Paris for any other purpose than to break up housekeeping, settle my little affairs, find a situation for Monsieur and Madame Le Vasseur, or provide for their subsistence, and then return with Thérèse to Geneva, there to reside for the rest of my days.

After taking this resolution, I suspended all serious affairs, the better to enjoy the company of my friends until the time of my departure. Of all the amusements of which I partook, that with which I was most pleased was sailing round the lake in a boat, with Deluc the father, his daughter-in-law, his two sons, and my Thérèse.

We gave seven days to this excursion, in the finest weather possible. I preserved a lively remembrance of the sites which struck me at the other extremity of the lake, and of which, some years afterwards, I gave a description in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

The principal acquaintances I made at Geneva, besides the Delucs, of whom I have spoken, were the young Minister Vernes, with whom I had already been acquainted at Paris, and of whom I then formed a better opinion than I afterwards had of him; Monsieur Perdriau, then a country pastor, now professor of literature, whose mild and agreeable society will ever make me regret the loss of it, although he has since thought it good manners to detach himself from me; Monsieur Jalabert, at that time professor of physics, since become counsellor and syndic, to whom I read my *Discours sur l'Inégalité*—but not the dedication—with which he seemed to be delighted; the Professor Lullin, with whom I maintained a correspondence until his death, and who gave me a commission to purchase books for the college library; the Professor Vernet, who, like most other people, turned his back upon me after I had given him proofs of attachment and confidence, of which he ought to have been sensible, if a theologian can be sensible of anything; Chappuis, clerk and successor to Gauffecourt, whom he wished to supplant, and who, soon afterwards, was himself supplanted; Marcet de Mézières, an old friend of my father, and who had shown himself to be mine, but who, after

having well deserved of his country, became a dramatic author, and, pretending to a place in the Council of Two Hundred, changed his principles and became ridiculous before he died. But he from whom I expected most was Moultou, a very promising young man by his talents and his brilliant intellect, whom I have always loved, although his conduct with respect to me was frequently equivocal, and notwithstanding his being connected with my most cruel enemies, yet whom I cannot but look upon as destined to become the defender of my memory and the avenger of his friend.

In the midst of these dissipations I neither lost the taste for my solitary excursions nor the practice of them. I frequently made long ones upon the banks of the lake, during which my mind, accustomed to reflection, did not remain idle. I digested the plan already formed of my *Institutions Politiques*, of which I shall shortly have to speak. I meditated a *Histoire du Valais*; the plan of a tragedy in prose, the subject of which, nothing less than Lucretia, did not deprive me of the hope of turning the laugh against my detractors, although I should dare again to exhibit that unfortunate heroine, when she could no longer be suffered upon any French stage. I at that time tried my abilities with Tacitus, and translated the first book of his history, which will be found amongst my papers.

After a residence of four months at Geneva, I returned in the month of October to Paris, and avoided passing through Lyons, that I

might not again have to travel with Gauffecourt. As the arrangements I had made did not require my being in Geneva until the following spring, I returned, during the winter, to my habits and occupations. The principal of the latter was examining the proof-sheets of my *Discours sur l'Inégalité*, which I had procured to be printed in Holland, by the bookseller Rey, with whom I had just become acquainted at Geneva. This work was dedicated to the Republic; but as the dedication might be displeasing to the Council, I wished to ascertain its effect at Geneva before I returned thither. This was not favourable to me; and the dedication, which the purest patriotism had dictated, only created me enemies in the Council, and inspired many of the burgesses with jealousy. Monsieur Chouet, at that time First Syndic, wrote me a polite but very cold letter, which will be found amongst my papers, packet A, No. 3. I received from private persons, amongst others from Deluc and De Jalabert, a few compliments, and these were all. I did not perceive that a single Genevese was honestly pleased with the hearty zeal found in the work. This indifference shocked all those by whom it was remarked. I remember that, dining one day at Clichy, at Madame Dupin's, with Crommelin, Resident from the Republic, and Monsieur de Mairan, the latter openly declared the Council owed me a present and public honours for the work, and that it would dishonour itself if it failed in either. Crommelin, who was a dark-complexioned and mischievous little man, dared

not reply in my presence, but he made a frightful grimace, which drew a smile from Madame Dupin. The only advantage this work procured me, besides that resulting from the satisfaction of my own heart, was the title of citizen given me by my friends, afterwards by the public after their example, and which I afterwards lost by having too well deserved it.<sup>1</sup>

This ill success would not have prevented my retiring to Geneva, had not more powerful motives tended to the same effect. Monsieur d'Épinay, wishing to add a wing which was wanting to the Château Chevette, was at an immense expense in completing it. Having gone one day with Madame d'Épinay to see the progress of the work, we continued our walk a quarter of a league further, to the reservoir of the waters of the park, which joined the Forest of Montmorency, and where there was a handsome kitchen garden with a little lodge, much out of repair, called the Hermitage. This solitary and very agreeable place had struck me when I saw it for the first time before my journey to Geneva. I had exclaimed in my transport: 'Ah, madame, what a delightful habitation! This asylum was purposely designed for me.' Madame d'Épinay did not seem to pay much attention to what I said, but in this second journey I was quite surprised to find, instead of the old decayed building, a small house almost entirely new, well laid out, and very habitable for a little family of three persons. Madame d'Épinay had caused this to

<sup>1</sup> After the condemnation of *Émile*.

be done in silence, and at a very small expense, by detaching a few materials and some of the workmen from the château. She now said to me, on remarking my surprise: 'My good bear, here behold your shelter: it is you who have chosen it; friendship offers it to you. I hope this will remove from you the cruel idea of separating from me.' I do not think I was ever in my life more strongly or more deliciously affected. I bathed with tears the beneficent hand of my friend; and if I was not conquered from that very instant, I was extremely staggered. Madame d'Épinay, who would not be denied, became so pressing, employed so many means, so many people, to circumvent me, proceeding even so far as to gain over Madame Le Vasseur and her daughter, that at length she triumphed over my resolutions. Renouncing the idea of residing in my own country, I resolved, I promised, to inhabit the Hermitage; and, whilst the building was drying, Madame d'Épinay took care to prepare furniture, so that everything was ready for occupation in the following spring.

One thing which greatly aided me in determining was the residence that Voltaire had chosen near Geneva. I foresaw that this man would cause a revolution there, and that I should find in my country the style and manners which drove me from Paris; that I should be under the necessity of incessantly struggling, and have no other alternative than that of being an insupportable pedant, or a bad and cowardly citizen. The letter which Voltaire had written



to me on my last work induced me to insinuate my fears in my answer, and the effect this produced confirmed them. From that moment I considered Geneva as lost, and I was not deceived. I perhaps ought to have breasted the storm, had I thought myself capable. But what could I have done alone, timid and speaking badly, against a man who was arrogant, opulent, supported by the credit of the great, eloquent, and already the idol of the women and young men? I was afraid of uselessly exposing myself to danger to no purpose. I listened to nothing but my peaceful disposition, to my love of repose, which if it then deceived me still continues to deceive me on the same subject. By retiring to Geneva I should have avoided great misfortunes, but I have my doubts whether, with all my ardent and patriotic zeal, I should have been able to effect anything great and useful for my country.

Tronchin, who about the same time went to reside at Geneva, came afterwards to Paris to play the mountebank, and brought back treasures. On his arrival he came to see me, with the Chevalier de Jaucourt. Madame d'Épinay had a strong desire to consult him in private, but so busy was he that this was not easily effected. She addressed herself to me, and I engaged Tronchin to go and see her. Thus under my auspices they began a connection, which was afterwards strengthened at my expense. Such has ever been my destiny: the moment I had united two friends, who were separately mine, they never failed to combine against me.

Although, in the conspiracy then formed by the Tronchins for the subjection of their country, they must all have borne me a mortal hatred, the doctor still continued friendly to me: he even wrote me a letter after his return to Geneva, to propose to me the place of honorary librarian. But I had taken my resolution, and the offer did not tempt me to depart from it.

About this time I again visited Monsieur d'Holbach. My visit was occasioned by the death of his wife, which, as well as that of Madame Francueil, happened whilst I was at Geneva. Diderot, when he communicated to me these events, spoke of the deep affliction of the husband. His grief affected my heart. I myself was grieved for the loss of that excellent woman, and wrote to Monsieur d'Holbach a letter of condolence. I forgot all the wrongs he had done me, and at my return from Geneva, and after he had made the tour of France with Grimm and other friends to alleviate his affliction, I went to see him, and continued my visits until my departure for the Hermitage. As soon as it was known in his circle that Madame d'Épinay was preparing me a habitation there, innumerable sarcasms, founded upon the want I must feel of the flattery and amusements of the city, and the supposition of my not being able to support the solitude for a fortnight, were uttered against me. Feeling within myself how I stood affected, I left him and his friends to say what they pleased, and pursued my intention. Monsieur

d'Holbach rendered me some services<sup>1</sup> in finding a place for the old Le Vasseur, who was eighty years of age, and a burden to his wife, from which she begged me to relieve her. He was put into a house of charity, where, almost as soon as he arrived, age and the grief of finding himself removed from his family sent him to the grave. His wife and all his children, except Thérèse, did not much regret his loss; but she, who loved him tenderly, has ever since been inconsolable, and never forgiven herself for having suffered him, at so advanced an age, to end his days in any other house than her own.

Much about the same time I received a visit I little expected, although it was from a very old acquaintance. My friend Venture, accompanied by another man, came upon me one morning by surprise. What a change did I discover in his person! Instead of his former gracefulness, he appeared sottish and vulgar, which made me extremely reserved with him. Either my eyes deceived me, or debauchery had stupefied his mind, or all his first splendour was the effect of his youth which was past. I saw him almost with indifference, and we parted rather coolly. But when he was gone the remembrance of our former connection so strongly

<sup>1</sup> This is an instance of the treachery of my memory. A long time after I had written the above, I learned, in conversing with my wife concerning her poor old father, that it was not Monsieur d'Holbach, but Monsieur de Chenonceaux, then one of the administrators of the Hôtel-Dieu, who procured this asylum for him. I had so totally forgotten the circumstances, and the idea of Monsieur d'Holbach's having done it was so strong in my mind, that I would have sworn it had been the latter.—R.

brought back the recollection of my younger days, so charmingly, so prudently dedicated to that angelic woman, who was not much less changed than himself; the little anecdotes of that happy time, the romantic day of Tounce passed with so much innocence and enjoyment in the company of those two charming girls, from whom a kiss of the hand was the only favour, and which, notwithstanding its being so trifling, had left me such lively, affecting, and lasting regrets—all the ravishing delirium of a young heart, which I had just felt in all its force, and of which I had thought the season for ever past for me—the tender remembrance of these delightful circumstances made me shed tears over my faded youth and its transports for ever lost to me. Ah! how many tears should I have shed over their tardy and fatal return, had I foreseen the evils I had yet to suffer from them! . \*

Before I left Paris, I enjoyed during the winter which preceded my retreat a pleasure after my own heart, and of which I tasted in all its purity. Palissot, Academician of Nancy, known by a few dramatic compositions, had just had one of them performed at Lunéville before the King of Poland. He perhaps thought to make his court by representing in his piece a man who had dared to enter into a literary dispute with the King. Stanislaus, who was generous, and did not like satire, was filled with indignation at the author's daring to be personal in his presence. The Comte de Tressan, by order of the prince, wrote to D'Alembert, as

well as to myself, to inform me that it was the intention of his Majesty to have Palissot expelled from his Academy. My answer was a strong solicitation in favour of Palissot, begging Monsieur de Tressan to intercede with the King in his behalf. His pardon was granted, and M. de Tressan, when he communicated to me the information in the name of the monarch, added that the matter should be inserted in the register of the Academy. I replied that this was less granting a pardon than perpetuating a punishment. At length, after repeated solicitations, I obtained a promise that nothing relative to the affair should be inserted in the register, and that no public trace should remain of it. The promise was accompanied, as well on the part of the King as on that of M. de Tressan, with assurances of esteem and respect, with which I was extremely flattered; and I felt on this occasion that the esteem of men who are themselves worthy of it produces in the mind a sentiment infinitely more noble and pleasing than that of vanity. I have transcribed into my collection the letters of M. de Tressan, with my answers to them; and the originals of the former will be found in packet A, Nos. 9, 10, and 11.

I am perfectly aware that if ever these memoirs become public I myself here perpetuate the remembrance of a fact of which I would wish to efface every trace; but I transmit many others as much against my inclination. The grand object of my undertaking, constantly before my eyes, and the indispensable duty of fulfilling it to its utmost extent, will not permit

me to be turned aside by trifling considerations, which would lead me from my purpose. In my strange and unparalleled situation I owe too much to truth to be further than this indebted to any person whatever. They who wish to know me well must be acquainted with me in every point of view, in every relative situation, both good and bad. My confessions are necessarily connected with those of many other people: I write both with the same frankness in everything that relates to that which has befallen me, believing that I am not obliged to spare any person more than myself, although it is my wish to do it. I am determined always to be just and true, to say of others all the good I can, never speaking of evil except when it relates to my own conduct, and there is a necessity for my so doing. Who, in the situation in which the world has placed me, has a right to require more at my hands? My confessions are not intended to appear during my lifetime, nor that of those whom they may affect. Were I master of my own destiny, and that of the book I am now writing, it should not be made public until long after my death and theirs. But the efforts which the dread of truth obliges my powerful enemies to make to destroy every trace of it render it necessary for me to do everything which the strictest right and the most severe justice will permit to preserve what I have written. Were the remembrance of me to be lost at my dissolution, rather than expose any person alive, I would, without a murmur, suffer an unjust and momentary

reproach ; but since my name is to live, it is my duty to endeavour to transmit with it to posterity the remembrance of the unfortunate man by whom it was borne, such as he really was, and not such as his unjust enemies incessantly endeavoured to describe him.

## .BOOK IX

[1756]

My impatience to inhabit the <sup>\*</sup>Hermitage not permitting me to await the return of fine weather, the moment my lodging was prepared I hastened to take possession of it, to the great amusement of the 'Coterie Holbachique,' which publicly predicted I should not be able to support solitude for three months, and that I should return disappointed to Paris, and live there as they did: For my part, having for fifteen years been out of my element, finding myself upon the eve of returning to it, I paid no attention to their pleasantries. Since, contrary to my inclinations, I had again entered the world, I had incessantly regretted my dear Charmettes, and the agreeable life I led there. I felt a natural inclination to retirement and the country: it was impossible for me to live happily elsewhere. At Venice, in the train of public affairs, placed in a kind of reflected dignity, in the pride of projects of advancement; at Paris, in the vortex of the great world, in the luxury of suppers, in the brilliancy of spectacles, in the rays of false glory—my groves, rivulets, and solitary walks constantly presented themselves to my recollec-



tion, interrupted my thoughts, rendered me melancholy, and made me sigh with desire. All the labour to which I had subjected myself, every project of ambition which by fits had animated my ardour, all had for object this happy country retirement, which I now thought near at hand. Without having acquired that moderate independence which I had judged to be the only means of accomplishing my views, I imagined myself, in my particular situation, to be able to do without it, and that I could attain the same end by means quite opposite. I had no regular income, but I possessed some talents, and had acquired a name. My wants were few, and I had freed myself from all those which were most expensive, and which merely depended on prejudice and opinion. Besides this, although naturally indolent, I was laborious when I chose to be so, and my idleness was less that of an indolent man than that of an independent one who applies to business when it pleases him. My profession of a copyist of music was neither splendid nor lucrative, but it was certain. The world gave me credit for the courage I had shown in making choice of it. I might depend upon having sufficient employment to enable me to live. Two thousand francs which remained of the produce of *Le Devin du Village*, and my other writings, were a sum which kept me from being straitened, and several works I had upon the stocks promised me, without extorting money from the booksellers, supplies sufficient to enable me to work at my ease without exhausting myself, even by turning to advantage the leisure of my walks. My little

family, consisting of three persons, all of whom were usefully employed, was not expensive to support. Finally, from my resources, proportioned to my wants and desires, I might reasonably expect a happy and permanent existence in that manner of life which my inclination had induced me to adopt.

I might have taken the interested side of the question, and, instead of subjecting my pen to copying, entirely devoted it to works which, from the elevation to which I had soared, and at which I found myself capable of continuing, might have enabled me to live in the midst of abundance, nay, even of opulence, had I been the least disposed to join the manœuvres of an author to the care of publishing a good book. But I felt that writing for bread would soon have stifled my genius and destroyed my talents, which were less in my pen than in my heart, and solely proceeded from an elevated and noble manner of thinking, by which alone they could be cherished and preserved. Nothing vigorous nor great can come of a pen totally venal. Necessity, nay even avarice, perhaps, would have made me write rather rapidly than well. If the desire of success had not led me into cabals, it might have inclined me to publish works pleasing to the multitude rather than such as were true and useful, and instead of a distinguished author, which I might possibly become, I should have been nothing more than a scribbler. No; I have always felt that the profession of letters was illustrious in proportion as it was less a trade. It is too difficult to think nobly when we think for a livelihood. To be

able—to dare even—to speak great truths, an author must be independent of success. I gave my books to the public with a certainty of having written for the common good, without the least concern for what was to follow. If the work was thrown aside, so much the worse for such as did not choose to profit by it. Their approbation was not necessary to enable me to live; my profession was sufficient to maintain me had not my works had a sale, for which reason indeed they all sold.

It was on the 9th of April 1756 that I left cities, never to reside in them again; for I do not call a residence the few days I afterwards spent in Paris, London, or other cities, always on the wing, or contrary to my inclinations. Madame d'Épinay came and took us all three in her coach; her farmer carted away my small baggage, and I was put into possession the same day. I found my little retreat simply furnished, but neatly, and even with some taste. The hand which had lent its aid in this furnishing rendered it inestimable in my eyes, and I thought it charming to be the guest of my female friend in a house of my own choice, which she had caused to be built purposely for me.

Although the weather was cold, and the ground lightly covered with snow, the earth began to vegetate: violets and primroses already made their appearance, the trees began to bud, and the evening of my arrival was distinguished by the first song of the nightingale, which was heard almost under my window, in a wood adjoining the house. After a light sleep, for-

getting when I awoke my change of abode, I still thought myself in the Rue de Grenelle, when suddenly this warbling gave me a start, and I exclaimed in my transport: 'At length all my wishes are accomplished!' The first thing I did was to abandon myself to the impression of the rural objects with which I was surrounded. Instead of beginning to set things in order in my new habitation, I began by planning future walks; and there was not a path, a copse, a grove, nor a corner in the environs of my place of residence that I had not visited by the next day. The more I examined this charming retreat, the more I found it to my wishes. This solitary, rather than savage, spot transported me in idea to the end of the earth. It had striking beauties which are but seldom found near cities; and never, if suddenly transported thither, could any person have imagined himself within four leagues of Paris.

After abandoning myself for a few days to this rural delirium, I began to arrange my papers and regulate my occupations. I set apart, as I had always done, my mornings to copying and my afternoons to walking, provided with my little note-book and a pencil, for never having been able to write and think at my ease except *sub dio*, I had no inclination to depart from this method; and I was persuaded that the Forest of Montmorency, which was almost at my door, would in future be my closet and study. I had several works begun; these I cast my eye over. My mind was sufficiently fertile in great projects, but in the bustle of the city the execution

of them had gone on but slowly. I proposed to myself to use more diligence when I should be less interrupted. I am of opinion that I have fairly fulfilled this intention, and for a man frequently ill, often at La Chevrette, at Épinay, at Éaubonne, at the Château de Montmorency, at other times interrupted by the indolent and curious, and always employed half the day in copying, if what I produced during the six years I passed at the Hermitage and at Montmorency be considered, I am persuaded it will appear that if in this interval I lost my time it was not in idleness.

Of the different works I had upon the stocks, that which I had longest revolved in my mind, which was most to my taste, to which I would willingly have devoted my life, and which, in my opinion, was to confirm the reputation I had acquired, was my *Institutions Politiques*. I had, thirteen or fourteen years before, when at Venice, where I had an opportunity of remarking the defects of that much-vaunted government, conceived the first idea of them. Since that time my views had become much more extended by the historical study of morality. I had perceived everything to be radically connected with politics, and that, upon whatever principles these were founded, a people would never be other than the nature of their government made them; therefore the great question of the best government possible appeared to me to be reduced to this: What is the kind of government fitted to form the most virtuous, enlightened, wisest, and, in a word, best people, taking the

last epithet in its most extensive meaning? I thought this question nearly allied to, even if different from, that which follows: What government is that which, by its nature, is always in closest relation to the law? Hence, what is law?—and a series of questions of similar importance. I perceived that these led to great truths, useful to the happiness of mankind, but more especially to that of my country, wherein, in the journey I had just made to it, I had not found notions of laws and liberty sufficiently just or clear. I had thought this indirect manner of communicating these to my fellow-citizens would be least mortifying to their pride, and might obtain me forgiveness for having seen a little further than themselves.\*

Although I had already laboured some five or six years at the work, the progress I had made in it was not considerable. Writings of this kind require meditation, leisure, and tranquillity. I had besides written the one in question, as the expression is, *en bonne fortune*, and had not communicated my project to any person, not even to Diderot. I was afraid it would be thought too daring for the age and country in which I wrote, and that the fears of my friends would embarrass me in completing it.<sup>1</sup> I did not yet

<sup>1</sup> It was more especially the wise severity of Duclos which inspired me with this fear; as for Diderot, I know not by what means all my conferences with him tended to make me more satirical and bitter than my natural disposition inclined me to be. This prevented me from consulting him upon an undertaking in which I wished to introduce nothing but the force of reasoning without the least appearance of ill-humour or partiality. The manner of this work may be judged of by that of the *Contrat Social*, which is taken from it.—R.

know, too, that it would be finished in time, and in such a manner as to appear before my decease. I wished fearlessly to give to my subject everything it required, fully persuaded that, not being of a satirical turn, and never wishing to be personal, I should in equity always be judged irreprehensible. I undoubtedly wished fully to enjoy the right of thinking which I had by birth; but still respecting the government under which I lived, without ever disobeying its laws; and, very attentive not to violate individual rights, I would not from fear renounce their advantages.

I confess even that, as a stranger, and living in France, I found the situation very favourable for one who dared to speak the truth; well knowing that continuing, as I was determined to do, not to print anything in the kingdom without permission, I was not obliged to give to any person in it an account of my maxims nor of their publication elsewhere. I should have been less independent even at Geneva, where, in whatever place my books might have been printed, the magistrate had a right to criticise their contents. This consideration had greatly contributed to make me yield to the solicitations of Madame d'Épinay, and abandon the project of fixing my residence at Geneva. I felt, as I have remarked in *Émile*, that unless an author be a man of intrigue, when he wishes to render his works really useful to any country, he must not compose them within her bounds.

What made me find my situation still more happy was my being persuaded that the govern-

ment of France would, perhaps, without looking upon me with a very favourable eye, make it a point of honour to protect me, or at least not to disturb my tranquillity. It appeared to me a stroke of simple yet dexterous policy, to make a merit of tolerating that which there was no means of preventing; since, had I been driven from France, which was all authority had the right to do, my work would still have been written, and, perhaps, with less reserve; whereas, if I were left undisturbed, the author remained to answer for what he wrote, and a prejudice, deeply rooted throughout Europe, would be destroyed in acquiring the reputation of observing an enlightened respect for personal rights.

They who, by the event, shall judge I was deceived may perhaps be deceiving themselves. In the storm which has since broken over my head, my books served as a pretext, but it was against my person that they aimed. They gave themselves little concern about the author, but they wished to ruin Jean-Jacques; and the greatest evil they found in my writings was the honour they might possibly do me. Let us not encroach upon the future. I do not know that this mystery, which is still one to me, will hereafter be cleared up to my readers; I only know this, that had my avowed principles been of a nature to bring upon me the treatment I received, I should sooner have become their victim, since the work<sup>1</sup> in which these principles are manifested with most courage, not to call it audacity, seemed to have had its effect previous to my

<sup>1</sup> *Le Discours sur l'Inégalité des Conditions.*



retreat to the Hermitage, without—I will not only say my having received the least censure, but without any steps having been taken to prevent its publication in France, where it was sold as publicly as in Holland. *La Nouvelle Héloïse* afterwards appeared with the same facility—I dare add, with the same applause; and, what seems almost incredible, the profession of faith of this same Héloïse at the point of death is exactly similar to that of the Savoyard Vicar. Every bold assertion in the *Contrat Social* had been before published in the *Discours sur l'Inégalité*; and every bold opinion in *Émile* had been previously stated in *Julie*. This unrestrained freedom did not excite any murmur against the two first works; therefore it was not that which gave cause to it against the latter.

Another undertaking much of the same kind, but of which the project was more recent, then especially engaged my attention: this was the extract from the works of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, of which, having been led away by the thread of my narrative, I have not hitherto been able to speak. The idea had been suggested to me, after my return from Geneva, by the Abbé de Mably, not immediately from himself, but by the interposition of Madame Dupin, who had some interest in engaging me to adopt it. She was one of the three or four pretty women of Paris of whom the old Abbé de Saint-Pierre had been the spoiled child, and, although she had not decidedly had the preference, she had at least partaken of it with Madame d'Aiguillon. She preserved for the memory of the good man a

respect and an affection which did honour to them both; and her self-love would have been flattered by seeing the still-born works of her friend brought to life by her secretary. These works certainly contained excellent things, but so badly told that the reading of them was nearly insupportable; and it is astonishing that the Abbe de Saint-Pierre, who looked upon his readers as big children, should nevertheless have spoken to them as men, by the little care he took to induce them to give him a hearing. It was for this purpose that the work was proposed to me as useful in itself, and very proper for a man laborious in compilation and arrangement, but idle as an author, who, finding the trouble of thinking very fatiguing, preferred, in things which pleased him, throwing a light upon and extending the ideas of others to producing any himself. Besides, not being confined to the functions of a translator, I was at liberty sometimes to think for myself; and I had it in my power to give such a form to my work that many important truths would pass in it under the name of the Abbe de Saint-Pierre, much more safely than under mine. The undertaking also was not trifling; the business was nothing less than to read, reflect upon, and make extracts from twenty-three volumes, diffuse, confused, full of long narrations and periods, repetitions, and false or narrow views, from amongst which it was necessary to select some few that were great and useful, and sufficiently encouraging to enable me to support the painful labour. I frequently wished to resign it, and should have

done so could I have got it off my hands with a good grace: but when I received the Abbe's manuscripts, which were given me by his nephew, the Comte de Saint-Pierre, at the solicitation of Saint-Lambert, I in some measure undertook to make use of them, which I must either have done, or have given them back. It was with the former intention I had taken the manuscripts to the Hermitage, and this was the first work to which I proposed to dedicate my leisure hours.

I had likewise in my own mind projected a third, the idea of which I owed to the observations I had made upon myself, and I felt the more disposed to undertake this work as I had reason to hope I could make it a truly useful one, and perhaps the most so of any that could be offered to the world, were the execution equal to the plan I had laid down. It has been remarked that most men are in the course of their lives frequently unlike themselves, and seem to be transformed into others very different from what they were. It was not to establish a thing so generally known that I wished to write a book; I had a newer and more important object. This was to search for the causes of these variations, and, by confining my observations to those which depend on ourselves, to demonstrate in what manner it might be possible to direct them, in order to render us better and more certain of our dispositions. For it is undoubtedly more painful to an honest man to resist desires already formed, which it is his duty to subdue, than to prevent, change, or modify the

same desires in their source, were he capable of tracing them to it. A man under temptation resists at one time because he has strength of mind ; he yields at another because he is weak ; had he been the same as before he would again have triumphed.

By examining within myself, and searching in others what could be the cause of these different manners of being, I discovered that, in a great measure, they depended on the anterior impression of external objects ; and that, continually modified by our senses and organs, we, without knowing it, bore in our ideas, sentiments, and even actions, the effect of these modifications. The striking and numerous observations I had collected were beyond all dispute, and by their natural principle seemed proper to furnish an exterior regimen, which, varied according to circumstances, might place and support the mind in the state most favourable to virtue. From how many mistakes would reason be preserved, how many vices would be stifled in their birth, were it possible to force animal economy to favour moral order, which it so frequently disturbs ! Climates, seasons, sounds, colours, light, darkness, the elements, food, noise, silence, motion, rest, all act on the animal machine, and consequently on the mind ; all offer us a thousand means, almost certain of directing in their origin the sentiments by which we suffer ourselves to be governed. Such was the fundamental idea of which I had already made a sketch upon paper, and whence I hoped for an effect the more certain, in favour of

persons naturally well disposed, who, sincerely loving virtue, were afraid of their own weakness, as it appeared to me easy to make of it a book as agreeable to read as it was to compose. I have, however, applied myself but very little to this work, the title of which was *La Morale Sensitive; ou, le Matérialisme du Sage*. Interruptions, the cause of which will soon appear, prevented me from continuing it, and the fate of the sketch, which is more connected with my own than it may appear to be, will hereafter be seen.

Beyond this, I had for some time meditated a system of education, of which Madame de Chenonceaux, alarmed for her son by that of her husband, had desired me to consider. The authority of friendship placed this object, although less in itself to my taste, nearer to my heart than any other, on which account this subject, of all those of which I have just spoken, is the only one I carried to its utmost extent. The end I proposed to myself in treating of it should, I think, have procured the author a better fate. But I will not here anticipate this melancholy subject. I shall have too much reason to speak of it in the course of my work.

These different objects offered me subjects of meditation for my walks; for, as I believe I have already observed, I can only reflect when walking: the moment I stop, I think no more; my head and feet must work together. I had, however, provided myself with a work for the closet upon rainy days. This was my *Dictionnaire de Musique*, which my scattered,

mutilated, and unshapen materials made it necessary to rewrite almost entirely. I had with me some books necessary to this purpose ; I had spent two months in making extracts from others, which I had borrowed from the Bibliothèque du Roi, whence I was permitted to take several to the Hermitage. I was thus provided with materials for composing in my apartment when the weather did not permit me to go out, and my copying fatigued me. This arrangement was so convenient that I made it turn to advantage as well at the Hermitage as at Montmorency, and afterwards even at Motiers, where I completed the work whilst I was engaged on others, and constantly found a change of occupation to be a real relaxation.

During a considerable time I exactly followed the distribution I had prescribed myself, and found it very agreeable ; but as soon as the fine weather brought Madame d'Épinay more frequently to Épinay, or to La Chevrette, I found that attentions in the first instance natural to me, but which I had not considered in my scheme, seriously deranged my projects. I have already observed that Madame d'Épinay had many amiable qualities ; she sincerely loved her friends, served them with zeal, and, not sparing for them either time or pains, certainly deserved on their part every attention in return. I had hitherto discharged this duty without considering it as one ; but at length I found that I had given myself a chain of which nothing but friendship prevented me from feeling the weight, and this was aggravated by

my dislike to numerous societies. Madame d'Épinay took advantage of these circumstances to make a proposition seemingly agreeable to me, but which was more so to herself; this was to let me know when she was alone, or had but little company. I consented, without perceiving to what a degree I engaged myself. The consequence was that I no longer visited her at my own hour but at hers, and that I never was certain of being master of myself for a day together. This constraint considerably diminished the pleasure I had in going to see her. I found the liberty she had so earnestly promised was given me upon no other condition than that of my never enjoying it; and once or twice when I wished to do this there were so many messages, notes, and alarms relative to my health, that I perceived I could have no excuse but being confined to my bed for not immediately running to her upon the first intimation. It was necessary I should submit to this yoke, and I did it, even more voluntarily than could be expected from so great an enemy to dependence: the sincere attachment I had to Madame d'Épinay preventing me, in a great measure, from feeling the inconvenience with which it was accompanied. She thus filled up, well or ill, the void which the absence of her usual circle left in her amusements. This for her was but a very slender supplement, although preferable to absolute solitude, which she could not support. She had nevertheless the means of doing it much more readily since she had begun to dabble in literature, and had taken it

into her head to write at random novels, letters, comedies, tales, and other trash of the same kind. But she was not so much amused in writing these as in reading them; and she never scribbled over two or three pages at one sitting without being previously assured of having at least two or three benevolent auditors at the end of so much labour. I seldom had the honour of being one of the chosen few, except by favour of another. When alone, I was, for the most part, considered as a cipher in everything; and this not only in the company of Madame d'Épinay, but in that of Monsieur d'Holbach, and in every place where Grimm gave the tone. This nullity was very convenient to me, except in a *tête-à-tête*, when I knew not what countenance to put on, not daring to speak of literature, of which it was not for me to say a word; nor of gallantry, being too timid, and fearing more than death the ridicule due to an old gallant; besides that I never had such an idea when in the company of Madame d'Épinay, and that it would perhaps never have occurred to me, had I passed my whole life with her: not that her person was in the least disagreeable to me; on the contrary, I loved her perhaps too much as a friend to do it as a lover. I felt a pleasure in seeing and speaking to her. Her conversation, although agreeable enough in a mixed company, was uninteresting in private; mine, not more florid than her own, was no great amusement to her. Ashamed of being long silent, I endeavoured to enliven the interview; and,



although this frequently fatigued me, I never felt bored by it. I was happy to show her little attentions, and gave her little fraternal kisses, which seemed not to be more sensual to herself; these were all. She was very thin, very pale, and had a bosom as flat as my hand. This defect alone would have been sufficient to cool my desires; neither my heart nor my senses could ever regard as a woman a female without breasts; besides, other causes useless to mention always made me forget the sex of this lady.<sup>1</sup>

Having resolved to conform to a subservience which was necessary, I immediately and voluntarily did so, and for the first year at least found it less burdensome than I could have expected. Madame d'Épinay, who commonly passed almost the whole summer in the country, continued there but a part of this; whether she was more detained by her affairs at Paris, or that the absence of Grimm rendered the residence of La Chevrette less agreeable to her, I know not. I took the advantage of the intervals of her absence, or when the company with her was numerous, to enjoy my solitude with my good Thérèse and her mother, in such a manner as to taste all its charms. Although I had for several years past been frequently in the country, I seldom had enjoyed much of its pleasures; and those excursions, always made in company with people who considered themselves as persons of consequence, and rendered insipid by constraint, served to increase in me the natural

<sup>1</sup> See vol. II p. 267.

desire I had for rustic pleasures. The want of these was the more sensible to me as I had the image of them immediately before my eyes. I was so tired of saloons, fountains, groves, parterres, and of the more tiresome persons by whom they were shown; so exhausted with pamphlets, harpsichords, cards, unravellings of plots, stupid bons-mots, insipid affectations, pitiful story-tellers, and great suppers, that when I gave a side-glance at a poor simple hawthorn bush, a hedge, a barn, or a meadow, when in passing through a hamlet I scented a good chervil omelette, and heard at a distance the burden of the rustic song of the Bisquières, I wished all rouge, furbelows, and amber at the devil, and envying the dinner of the good housewife, and the wine of her own vineyard, I heartily wished to give a slap on the chops to monsieur le chef and monsieur le maître, who made me dine at the hour of supper, and sup when I should have been asleep, but especially to messieurs the lackeys, who devoured with their eyes the morsel I put into my mouth, and upon pain of my dying with thirst sold me the adulterated wine of their master, ten times dearer than that of a better quality would have cost me at a tavern.

Behold me then at length at home, in an agreeable and solitary asylum, at liberty to pass there the remainder of my days, in that peaceful, equal, and independent life for which I felt myself born. Before I relate the effects which this situation, so new to me, had upon my heart, it is proper that I should recapitulate its

secret affections, that the reader may better follow in their causes the progress of these new modifications.

I have always considered the day on which I was united to Thérèse as that which fixed my moral existence. An attachment was necessary for me, since that which should have sufficed me had been so cruelly broken. The thirst after happiness is never extinguished in the heart of man. Mamma was advancing into years, and dishonoured herself! I had proofs that she could never more be happy here below; it therefore remained for me to seek my own happiness, having lost all hopes of sharing hers. I was sometimes irresolute, and fluctuated from one idea to another, and from project to project. My journey to Venice would have thrown me into public life, had the man with whom I was unluckily connected had common sense. I was easily discouraged, especially in undertakings of length and difficulty. The ill success of this disgusted me with every other; and, according to my old maxims, considering distant objects as deceitful allurements, I resolved thenceforth to live only from day to day, seeing nothing in life which could tempt me to make extraordinary efforts.

It was precisely at this time that we became acquainted. The mild character of this good girl seemed so fitted to my own that I united myself to her with an attachment which neither time nor injuries have been able to impair, and which has constantly been increased by whatever might have been expected to sever it. The

force of this sentiment will hereafter appear when I come to speak of the grievous wounds she has given my heart in the depth of my misery, without my having, up to the moment when I write this, ever uttered one word of complaint to any person.

When it shall be known that, after having done everything, braved everything, to avoid separation from her, that after passing with her twenty-five years, in despite of fate and men, I have in my old age made her my wife, without the least expectation or solicitation on her part, or promise or engagement on mine, the world will think that love bordering upon madness, having from the first moment turned my head, led me by degrees to the last act of extravagance; and this will be the more strongly believed when the urgent and particular reasons which should for ever have prevented me taking such a step are made known. What, therefore, will the reader think when I shall have told him, with all the truth with which he ought now to credit me, that, from the first moment in which I saw her until this day, I have never felt the least spark of love for her, that I never desired to possess her more than I did to possess Madame de Warens, and that the physical wants which were satisfied with her person were, for me, solely those of the sex, and by no means proper to the individual? He will think that, being of a constitution different from that of other men, I was incapable of love, since this was not one of the sentiments which attached me to women the most dear to my heart.

Patience, my dear reader ! the fatal moment approaches in which you will be but too much undeceived.

I fall into repetitions ; I know it ; it must be so. The first of my wants, the greatest, strongest, and most inextinguishable, was wholly in my heart—the want of an intimate connection, and as intimate as it could possibly be. For this reason especially a woman was more necessary to me than a man, a female rather than a male friend. This singular want was such that the closest corporal union was not sufficient : two souls would have been necessary to me in the same body, without which I always felt a void. I thought I was upon the point of ceasing to feel it. This young person, amiable by a thousand excellent qualities, and at that time by her form, without the shadow of art or coquetry, would have confined within herself my whole existence, could hers, as I had hoped it would, have been totally confined to me. I had nothing to fear from men ; I am certain of being the only man she ever really loved, and her moderate passions seldom wanted another, not even after I ceased in this respect to be one to her. I had no family : she had one ; and this family, composed of individuals whose dispositions were so different from hers, I could never make my own. This was the first cause of my unhappiness. What would I not have given to have been the child of her mother ? I did everything in my power to become so, but could never succeed. I in vain attempted to unite all our interests : this was impossible.

She always created herself one different from mine, contrary to it, and even to that of her daughter, which already was no longer separated from it. She, her other children and grandchildren, became so many leeches, and the least evil these did to Thérèse was robbing her. The poor girl, accustomed to submit, even to her nieces, suffered herself to be pilfered and governed without saying a word; and I perceived with grief that by exhausting my purse, and giving her advice, I did nothing that could be of any real advantage to her. I endeavoured to detach her from her mother, but she constantly resisted such a proposal. I respected her resistance, and esteemed her the more for it; but her refusal was not on this account less to the prejudice of us both. Abandoned to her mother and the rest of her family, she belonged to them rather than to me--rather, indeed, than to herself. Their greed was less ruinous than their advice was pernicious to her; in fact, if, on account of the love she had for me, added to her good natural disposition, she was not quite their slave, she was enough so to hinder in a great measure the effect of the good maxims I endeavoured to instil into her; this was a sufficient cause, notwithstanding all my efforts, to prevent our being ever truly united.

Thus was it that, notwithstanding a sincere and reciprocal attachment, in which I had lavished all the tenderness of my heart, the void in that heart was never completely filled. Children, by whom this effect should have been produced, were brought into the world, but

these only made things worse. I trembled at the thought of intrusting them to this ill-bred family, to be still worse educated. The risk of the education of the *Enfants-Trouvés* was much less. This reason for the resolution I took, much stronger than all those I stated in my letter to Madame de Francueil, was, however, the only one with which I dared not make her acquainted ; I chose rather to appear less excusable than expose to reproach the family of a person I loved. But by the conduct of her wretched brother, notwithstanding all that can be said in his defence, it will be judged whether I ought to have exposed my children to an education similar to his.

Not having it in my power to taste in all its plenitude the charms of that intimate connection of which I felt the want, I sought for substitutes, which did not fill up the void, though they made it less sensible. Not having a friend entirely devoted to me, I wanted others whose impulse should overcome my indolence. For this reason I cultivated and strengthened my relations with Diderot and the Abbé de Condillac, formed with Grimm a new one still more intimate, till at length, by the unfortunate Discourse of which I have related some particulars, I unexpectedly found myself thrown back into literature, which I thought I had quitted for ever.

My first steps conducted me by a new path to another intellectual world, the simple and noble economy of which I cannot contemplate without enthusiasm. I reflected so much on

the subject that I soon saw nothing but error and folly in the doctrine of our sages, and oppression and misery in our social order. In the illusion of my foolish pride I thought myself capable of destroying all imposture; and thinking that, to make myself listened to, it was necessary that my conduct should agree with my principles, I adopted the singular manner of life which I have not been permitted to continue, the example of which my pretended friends have never forgiven me, which at first made me ridiculous, and would at length have rendered me worthy of respect, had it been possible for me to persevere.

Until then I had been good; from that moment I became virtuous, or at least infatuated with virtue. This infatuation had begun in my head, but afterwards passed into my heart. The most noble pride there took root amongst the ruins of extirpated vanity. I affected nothing: I became what I appeared to be; and during four years at least, whilst this effervescence continued at its greatest height, there is nothing great and good that can enter the heart of man of which I was not capable between heaven and myself. Hence flowed my sudden eloquence; hence, in my first writings, that fire really celestial which consumed me, and whence during forty years not a single spark had escaped, because it was not yet lighted up.

I was really transformed; my friends and acquaintance scarcely knew me. I was no longer that timid and rather bashful than modest man who neither dared to present him-



self nor utter a word, whom a single pleasantry disconcerted, and who blushed at the glance of a woman's eyes. I became bold, haughty, intrepid, with a confidence the more firm as it was simple, which resided in my soul rather than in my manner. The contempt with which my profound meditations had inspired me for the manners, maxims, and prejudices of the age in which I lived rendered me proof against the raillery of those by whom they were possessed, and I crushed their little pleasantries with a sentence, as I would have crushed an insect with my fingers. What a change ! All Paris repeated the severe and acute sarcasms of the same man who, two years before and ten years afterwards, knew not how to find what he had to say, nor the word he ought to employ. Let the situation in the world the most contrary to my natural disposition be sought after, and this will be found. Let one of the short moments of my life in which I became another man, and ceased to be myself, be recollected—this also will be found in the time of which I speak ; but, instead of continuing only six days, or six weeks, it lasted almost six years, and would perhaps still continue but for the particular circumstances which caused it to cease, and restored me to nature, above which I had wished to soar.

The beginning of this change took place as soon as I had quitted Paris, and the sight of the vices of that city no longer fed the indignation with which it had inspired me. I no sooner had lost sight of men than I ceased to despise

them ; when I no longer beheld the wicked, I ceased to hate them. My heart, little fitted for hatred, pitied their misery, and even their wickedness. This situation, more pleasing but less sublime, soon allayed the ardent enthusiasm by which I had so long been transported, and I insensibly, almost to myself even, again became fearful, complaisant, and timid—in a word, the same Jean-Jacques I before had been.

Had this revolution gone no further than restoring me to myself, all would have been well, but, unfortunately, it rapidly carried me away to the other extreme. From that moment my mind in agitation passed the line of repose, and its oscillations, continually renewed, have never permitted it to remain *lière*. I must enter into some detail of this second revolution—terrible and fatal era of a lot unparalleled amongst mortals.

We were but three persons in our retirement, it was therefore natural that our intimacy should be increased by leisure and solitude. This was the case between Therèse and myself. We passed together in the shade the most charming and delightful hours, more so than any I had hitherto enjoyed. She seemed to taste of this sweet intercourse more than I had until then observed her to do ; she opened her heart and communicated to me relative to her mother and family things she had had resolution enough to conceal for a great length of time. Both had received from Madame Dupin numerous presents, bestowed on my account, and intended for me, but which the cunning old

woman, to prevent my being angry, had appropriated to her own use and that of her other children, without suffering Therèse to have the least share, strongly forbidding her to say a word to me of the matter— an order which the poor girl had obeyed with an incredible exactness.

But another thing which surprised me much more than this was the discovery that, besides the private conversations that Diderot and Grimm had frequently had with both to endeavour to detach them from me, in which, owing to the resistance of Therèse, they had not been able to succeed, they had afterwards had frequent secret conferences with the mother, the daughter being quite ignorant of what was brewing between them. However, she knew little presents had been made, and that there were mysterious goings and comings, the motive of which was entirely unknown to her. When we left Paris, Madame Le Vasseur had long been in the habit of going to see Grimm twice or thrice a month, and continuing with him for hours together, in conversation so secret that the servant was always sent out of the room.

I judged this motive to be of the same nature with the project into which they had attempted to make the daughter enter, by promising to procure her and her mother, by means of Madame d'Épinay, a salt-huckster's licence, or a snuff-shop; in a word, by tempting her with the allurements of gain. They had been told that, as I was not in a situation to do anything for them, I could not, on their account, do any-

thing for myself. As in all this I saw nothing but good intentions, I was not absolutely displeased with them for it. The mystery was the only thing which gave me pain, especially on the part of the old woman, who, moreover, daily became more parasitical and flattering towards me. This, however, did not prevent her from reproaching her daughter in private with telling me everything, and loving me too much, observing that she was a fool, and would at length be made a dupe.

This woman possessed, to a supreme degree, the art of multiplying the presents made her, by concealing from one what she received from another, and from me what she received from all. I could have pardoned her avarice, but it was impossible I should forgive her dissimulation. What could she have to conceal from me, whose happiness she knew principally consisted in that of herself and her daughter? What I had done for the daughter I had done for myself, but the services I rendered her mother merited, on her part, some acknowledgment. She ought, at least, to have thought herself obliged for them to her daughter, and to have loved me for the sake of her by whom I was already beloved. I had raised her from the lowest state of wretchedness; she received from my hands the means of subsistence, and was indebted to me for her acquaintance with the persons from whom she reaped so much benefit. Thérèse had long supported her by her industry, and now maintained her with my bread. She owed everything to this daughter,

for whom she had done nothing ; and her other children, to whom she had given marriage portions, and on whose account she had ruined herself, far from giving her the least aid, devoured her substance and mine. I thought that, in such a situation, she ought to consider me as her only friend and most sure protector, and that, far from making of my own affairs a secret to me, and conspiring against me in my own house, it was her duty faithfully to acquaint me with everything in which I was interested, when this came to her knowledge before it did to mine. In what light, therefore, could I consider her false and mysterious conduct ? What could I think of the sentiments with which she endeavoured to inspire her daughter ? What monstrous ingratitude was this, to endeavour to instil it into her !

These reflections at length alienated my affections from this woman to such a degree that I could no longer look upon her but with contempt. I, nevertheless, continued to treat with respect the mother of my dear companion, and in everything to show her almost the reverence of a son ; but I must confess I could not remain long with her without pain, and that I never knew how to bear constraint.

This is another short moment of my life in which I approached near to happiness without being able to attain it, and this by no fault of my own. Had this woman been of a good disposition, we all three should have been happy to the end of our days : the longest liver only would have been to be pitied. Instead of which,

the reader will see the course things took, and judge whether or not it was in my power to change it.

Madame Le Vasseur, who perceived I had got entire possession of the heart of her daughter, and that she had lost ground with her, endeavoured to regain it; and, instead of striving to restore herself to my good opinion through her, attempted to alienate her altogether from me. One of the means she employed was to call her family to her aid. I had begged Therèse not to invite any of them to the Hermitage, and she had promised me she would not. They were sent for in my absence, without consulting her, and she was afterwards prevailed upon to promise not to say anything of the matter. After the first step was taken all the rest were easy. When once we make a secret of anything to the person we love, we soon make little scruple of doing it in everything. The moment I was at La Chevrette the Hermitage was full of people, who sufficiently amused themselves. A mother has always great power over a daughter of a mild disposition; yet, notwithstanding all the old woman could do, she was never able to prevail upon Therèse to enter into her views, nor to persuade her to join in the league against me. For her part, she resolved upon doing it for ever; and seeing on one side her daughter and myself, who were in a situation to live, and that was all; on the other Diderot, Grimm, D'Holbach, and Madame d'Épinay, who promised great things, and gave some little ones, she could not conceive it was possible to be in

the wrong with the wife of a farmer-general and of a baron. Had I been more clear-sighted, I should, from this moment, have perceived that I nourished a serpent in my bosom. But my blind confidence, which nothing had yet diminished, was such that I could not imagine how one could wish to injure the person one ought to love. Though I saw numerous conspiracies forming on every side, all I complained of was the tyranny of persons who called themselves my friends, and who, as it seemed, would force me to be happy in their way, and not in mine.

Although Therèse refused to join in the confederacy with her mother, she afterwards kept the secret. For this her motive was commendable; I will not determine whether she did well or ill.\* Two women who have secrets between them love to prattle together: this attracted them towards each other, and Therèse, by dividing herself, sometimes let me feel I was alone, for I could no longer consider as a society that which we all three formed. I now felt the neglect I had been guilty of during the first years of our connection in not taking advantage of the docility with which her love inspired her to improve her talents and give her knowledge, which, by more closely connecting us in our retirement, would agreeably have filled up her time and my own, without once suffering us to perceive the length of a private conversation. Not that this was ever exhausted between us, or that she showed weariness or lack of interest during our walks; but we had not a

sufficient number of ideas common to both to make ourselves a great store, and we could not incessantly talk of our future projects, which were confined to those of enjoying the pleasures of life. The objects around us inspired me with reflections beyond the reach of her comprehension. An attachment of twelve years' standing had no longer need for words; we were too well acquainted with each other to have any new knowledge to acquire in that respect. The resource of puns, jests, gossiping, and scandal was all that remained. In solitude especially is it that the advantage of living with a person who knows how to think is particularly felt. I wanted not this resource to amuse myself with her, but she would have stood in need of it to have always found amusement with me. The worst of all was our being obliged to hold our conversations when we could not see her mother, who became importunate, obliged me to watch for opportunities to do it. I was under constraint in my own house: this is saving everything; the air of love was prejudicial to good friendship. We had an intimate intercourse without living in intimacy.

The moment I thought I perceived that Therese sometimes sought for a pretext to elude the walks I proposed to her I ceased to invite her to accompany me, without being displeased with her for not finding in them so much amusement as I did. Pleasure is not a thing which depends upon the will. I was sure of her heart, and that was all I desired. As long as my pleasures were hers, I tasted of them



with her : when this ceased to be the case, I preferred her contentment to my own.

In this manner it was that, half deceived in my expectation, leading a life after my own heart, in a residence I had chosen with a person who was dear to me, I at length found myself almost alone. What I still wanted prevented me from enjoying what I had. With respect to happiness and enjoyment, everything or nothing was what was necessary to me. The reason of these observations will hereafter appear. At present I return to the thread of my narrative.

I imagined that I possessed treasures in the manuscripts given me by the Comte de Saint-Pierre. On examination, I found they were little more than the collection of the printed works of his uncle, with notes and corrections by his own hand, and a few other trifling fragments, which had not yet been published. I confirmed myself, by these moral writings, in the idea I had conceived from some of his letters, shown me by Madame de Cicqui, that he had a better understanding than at first I had imagined ; but, after a careful examination of his political works, I discerned nothing but superficial notions, and projects that were useful but impracticable, in consequence of the idea from which the author never could depart, that men conducted themselves by their enlightenment rather than by their passions. The high opinion he had of the knowledge of the moderns had made him adopt this false principle of perfected reason, the basis of all the institutions he pro-

posed, and the source of his political sophisms. This extraordinary man—an honour to the age in which he lived, and to the human species, and perhaps the only person since the creation of mankind whose sole passion was devotion to reason—wandered nevertheless, in all his systems, from error to error, by attempting to mislead men like himself, instead of taking them as they were, are, and will continue to be. He laboured for imaginary beings, while he thought himself employed for the benefit of his contemporaries.

All these things considered, I was rather embarrassed as to the form I should give to my work. To suffer the author's visions to pass without doing more than useful, fully to refute them would have been impolite, as the charge of his manuscripts, which I had accepted, and even requested, imposed on me the obligations of treating the author honourably. I at length concluded upon that which to me appeared the most decent, judicious, and useful. This was to give separately my own ideas and those of the author, and, for this purpose, to enter into his views, to set them in the best light, to amplify and extend them,\* and spare nothing which might contribute to present them in all their excellence.

My work, therefore, was to be composed of two parts absolutely distinct. one, to explain, in the manner I have just mentioned, the different projects of the author, in the other, which was not to appear until the first had had its effect, I should have given my opinion upon

these projects, which I confess might have sometimes exposed them to the fate of the sonnet in *Le Misanthrope*. At the head of the whole was to have been the life of the author, for which I had collected some good materials, and I flattered myself that I should not spoil them in the task. I had seen a little of the Abbe de Saint-Pierre in his old age, and the veneration I had for his memory warranted me, upon the whole, that the Comte would not be dissatisfied with the manner in which I should treat his relation.

I made my first essay on *La Paix Perpetuelle*, the greatest and most elaborate of all the works which composed the collection, and before I abandoned myself to my reflections I had the courage to read everything the abbe had written upon this fine subject without once suffering myself to be repelled either by his long periods or repetitions. The public have seen the extract, on which account I have no more to say. My opinion of it has not been printed, nor do I know that it ever will be; however, it was written at the time the extract was made. From this I passed to *La Polysynodie*, or plurality of councils, a work written under the Regent to favour the administration he had chosen, and which caused the Abbe de Saint-Pierre to be expelled from the Academy on account of some remarks, unfavourable to the preceding administration, with which the Duchesse du Maine and Cardinal de Polignac were irritated. I completed this work, as I did the former, with an extract and remarks; but I stopped here

without desiring to continue the undertaking, which I ought never to have begun.

The reflection which induced me to give it up naturally presents itself, and it was astonishing I had not made it sooner. Most of the writings of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre were either observations, or contained observations, on certain parts of the government of France; and several of these were of so free a nature that it was happy for him he had made them with impunity. But in the offices of the ministers of state the Abbe de Saint-Pierre had ever been considered as a kind of preacher rather than a real politician, and he was suffered to say what he pleased, because it seemed clear that nobody listened to him. Had I procured him readers the case would have been different. He was a Frenchman, and I was not one; and by repeating his censures, although in his own name, I exposed myself to be asked, rather rudely, but without injustice, what I meddled with. Happily, before proceeding any further I perceived the hold I was about to give the government against me, and I immediately withdrew. I knew that, living alone in the midst of men, and men more powerful than myself, I never could by any means whatever be sheltered from the injury they might choose to do me. There was but one thing which depended on my own efforts: this was to observe such a line of conduct that whenever they chose to injure me they could not do it without being unjust. This maxim, which induced me to abandon the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, has frequently made me give up

projects that I had much more at heart. These folk, who are always ready to construe adversity into a crime, would be much surprised were they to know the pains I have taken during my life that in my misfortunes it might never with truth be said of me : 'Thou hast well deserved them.'

This task abandoned, I remained some time uncertain as to the work which should succeed it, and this interval of inactivity was destructive by permitting me to turn my reflections on myself, for want of another object to engage my attention. I had no project for the future which could amuse my imagination. It was not even possible to form any, as my situation was precisely that in which all my desires were united. I had not another to conceive, and yet there was a void in my heart. This state was the more cruel, as I saw no other which was to be preferred to it. I had concentrated my most tender affections upon a person after my own heart, who made me a complete return of her own.

I lived with her without constraint, and, so to speak, at discretion. Notwithstanding this, a secret grief of mind never quitted me for a moment, either when she was present or absent. In possessing Therèse, I still perceived that happiness was incomplete ; and the sole idea of my not being everything to her had such an effect upon my mind that she was next to nothing to me.

I had friends of both sexes, to whom I was attached by the purest friendship and most per-

fect esteem. I depended upon a real return on their part, and a doubt of their sincerity never entered my mind ; yet this friendship was more tormenting than agreeable to me by their obstinate perseverance, and even their affectation in opposing my tastes, inclinations, and manner of living ; and this to such a degree, that the moment I seemed to desire a thing which interested myself only, and depended not upon them, they immediately joined their efforts to oblige me to renounce it. This continued desire to control me in all my wishes—the more unjust as I did not so much as make myself acquainted with theirs—became so cruelly oppressive that at length I never received one of their letters without feeling, as I opened it, a certain terror which was but too well justified by the contents. I thought being treated as a child by persons younger than myself, and who themselves stood in great need of the advice they so prodigally bestowed on me, was too much. ‘Love me,’ said I to them, ‘as I love you, but beyond this meddle no farther in my affairs than I do in yours ; this is all I ask.’ If they granted me one of these two requests, it was not the latter.

I had a retired residence in a charming solitude, was master of my own house, and could live in it in the manner I thought proper without being controlled by any person ; yet this habitation imposed on me duties agreeable to discharge, but indispensable. All my liberty was but precarious ; in a greater state of subjection than a person at the command of another,

it was my duty to be so by inclination. When I arose in the morning I never could say to myself, I will employ this day as I think proper. And, moreover, besides my being subject to obey the call of Madame d'Épinay, I was exposed to the still more disagreeable importunities of the public and chance comers. The distance from Paris did not prevent groups of idlers, not knowing how to spend their time, from daily breaking in upon me, and without the least scruple freely disposing of mine. When I least expected visitors I was unmercifully assailed by them, and I seldom made a plan for the agreeable employment of the day that was not overturned by the arrival of some person.

In short, finding no real enjoyment in the midst of the pleasures I had been most desirous to obtain, I, by sudden mental transitions, returned in imagination to the serene days of my youth, and sometimes exclaimed with a sigh : ' Ah ! this is not *Les Charmettes* ! '

The recollection of the different periods of my life led me to reflect upon that at which I was arrived, and I found myself already on the decline, a prey to painful disorders, and imagined I was approaching the end of my days, without having tasted, in all its plenitude, scarcely one of the pleasures after which my heart had so much thirsted, or given scope to the lively sentiments that I felt I had in reserve. I had not savoured even that intoxicating voluptuousness with which my mind was richly stored, and which, for want of an object, was always compressed and never exhaled but by signs.

How was it possible that, with a mind naturally expansive, I, to whom life meant love, should not hitherto have found a friend entirely devoted to me, a real friend---I who felt myself so capable of being such? How can it be accounted for, that with such inflammable senses, and a heart wholly made up of love, I had not once, at least, felt its flame for a determinate object? Tormented by the want of loving, without ever having been able to satisfy it, I perceived myself approaching the portal of old age, and hastening to death without having lived.

These melancholy but affecting recollections led me to study myself with a regret that was not wholly displeasing. I thought something I had not yet received was still due to me from destiny. To what end was I born with exquisite faculties, which are yet suffered to remain unemployed? The sentiment of conscious merit, which made me feel this injustice, was some kind of reparation, and caused me to shed tears which with pleasure I suffered to flow.

These were my meditations during the finest season of the year, in the month of June, in cool shades, to the song of the nightingale and the rippling of brooks. Everything concurred in plunging me into that too seducing state of indolence for which I was born, but from which my austere manner, proceeding from a long effervescence, should for ever have delivered me. I unfortunately recollected the dinner of the Château de Toune, and my meeting with those two charming girls in the same season, in places



much resembling that in which I then was. The remembrance of these circumstances, which the innocence that accompanied them rendered still more dear to me, brought several others of the nature to my recollection. I presently saw myself surrounded by all the objects which, in my youth, had given me emotion: Mademoiselle Galley, Mademoiselle de Graffenried, Mademoiselle de Breil, Madame Bazile, Madame de Larnage, my pretty scholars, and even the bewitching Zulietta, whom my heart cannot forget. I found myself in the midst of a seraglio of houris of my old acquaintance, for whom the most lively inclination was not new to me. My blood became inflamed, my head turned, notwithstanding my hair was growing grey; and behold the grave citizen of Geneva, the austere Jean-Jacques, at forty-five years of age, again become the fond shepherd. The intoxication with which my mind was seized, although sudden and extravagant, was so strong and lasting, that no less potent remedy could cure me than the unforeseen and terrible crisis of misfortune into which it cast me.

This intoxication, to whatever degree it was carried, went not so far as to make me forget my age and situation, to flatter me that I could still inspire love, nor to make me attempt to communicate the devouring but sterile flame by which ever since my youth I had felt my heart in vain consumed. For this I did not hope; I did not even desire it. I knew the season of love was past; I knew too well the ridicule in which superannuated gallants are held ever

to add one to the number, and I was not a man to become a confident coxcomb in the decline of life, after having been so different during the flower of my age. Besides, as a friend to peace, I should have been apprehensive of domestic dissensions; and I too sincerely loved my *Thérèse* to expose her to the mortification of seeing me entertain for others more lively sentiments than those with which she inspired me for herself.

What step did I take upon this occasion? My reader will already have guessed it, if he has followed me ever so carelessly to this point. The impossibility of attaining real beings threw me into the regions of chimera, and seeing nothing in existence worthy of my delirium, I sought food for it in the ideal world, which my creative imagination quickly peopled with beings after my own heart. This resource never came at a happier moment, nor was it ever so fertile. In my continual ecstasies I intoxicated my mind with the most delicious sentiments that ever entered the heart of man. Entirely forgetting the human species, I formed to myself societies of perfect beings, whose virtues were as celestial as their beauty—tender and faithful friends, such as I never found here below. I became so fond of soaring thus in the empyrean, in the midst of the charming objects with which I was surrounded, that I there passed hours and days without perceiving it; and, losing the remembrance of all other things, I scarcely had eaten a morsel in haste before I was impatient to make my escape and run to

regain my groves. When, ready to depart for the enchanted world, I saw the approach of wretched mortals who came to detain me upon earth, I could neither conceal nor moderate my vexation; and, no longer master of myself, I gave them so uncivil a reception that it might be termed brutal. This tended to confirm my reputation as a misanthrope, from the very cause which, could the world have read my heart, should have acquired me one of a nature directly opposite.

In the midst of my utmost exaltation I was pulled down like a paper kite, and restored to my proper place, by means of a smart attack of my disorder. I recurred to the only means that had before given me relief, and thus made a truce with my angelic amours; for, besides that it seldom happens that a man is amorous when he suffers, my imagination, which is animated in the country and beneath the shade of trees, languishes and expires in a chamber and under the joists of a ceiling. I have frequently regretted that there exist no Dryads; it would certainly have been amongst these that I should have fixed my attachment.

Other domestic Broils came at the same time to increase my chagrin. Madame Le Vasseur, while making me the finest compliments in the world, alienated her daughter from me as much as she could. I received letters from my late neighbourhood, informing me that the good old lady had secretly contracted several debts in the name of Therèse, to whom the matter became known, but of which she had never said a word.

The debts to be paid hurt me much less than the secret that had been made of them. How could she, with whom I had never had a secret, be secret with me? Is it possible to dissimulate with persons whom we love? The Coterie Holbachique, who found that I never made a journey to Paris, began seriously to be afraid that I was happy and satisfied in the country, and madman enough to remain there. Hence the cabals by which attempts were made to recall me indirectly to the city. Diderot, who did not wish to show himself immediately, began by detaching from me Deleyre, whom I had introduced to him, and who received and transmitted to me the impressions that Diderot chose to give, without suspecting to what end they were directed.

Everything seemed to concur in withdrawing me from my charming and mad reverie. I had not recovered from my late attack when I received a copy of the poem on the destruction of Lisbon, which I imagined to be sent by the author. This made it necessary that I should write to him and speak of his composition. I did so, and my letter was a long time afterwards printed without my consent, as I shall hereafter have occasion to remark.

Struck by seeing this poor man, overwhelmed, if I may so speak, with prosperity and honour, bitterly exclaiming against the miseries of this life, and finding everything to be wrong, I formed the insensate project of making him look into his own heart, and of proving to him that everything was right. Voltaire, while

always appearing to believe in God, never really believed in anything but the devil, since his pretended Deity is a malicious being, who, according to him, takes no pleasure but in evil. The glaring absurdity of this doctrine is particularly disgusting in a man enjoying the greatest prosperity; who, from the bosom of happiness, endeavours, by the frightful and cruel image of all the calamities from which he is exempt, to reduce his fellows to despair. I, who had a better right than he to calculate and weigh the evils of human life, impartially examined them, and proved to him that of all those evils there was not one to be attributed to Providence, and which had not its source rather in the abusive use man made of his faculties than in nature. I treated him, in this letter, with the greatest respect and delicacy possible. Yet, knowing his self-love to be extremely irritable, I did not send the letter immediately to himself, but to Dr. Tronchin, his physician and friend, with full power either to give it to him or destroy it. Voltaire informed me in a few lines that being ill, having likewise the care of a sick person, he postponed his answer until some future day, and said not a word upon the subject. Tronchin, when he sent me the letter, inclosed in it another, in which he expressed but very little esteem for the person from whom he had received it.

I have never published, nor even shown, either of these two letters, not liking to make a parade of such little triumphs; but the originals are in my collections (A, Nos. 20

and 21), Since that time Voltaire has published the answer he promised me, but which I never received. This is none other than the novel of *Candide*, of which I cannot speak, because I have not read it.

All these interruptions ought to have radically cured me of my fantastic amours, and they were perhaps the means offered me by Heaven to prevent their destructive consequences; but my evil star prevailed, and I had scarcely begun to go out before my heart, my head, and my feet returned to the same paths. I say the same in certain respects, for my ideas, rather less exalted, remained this time upon earth, but yet were busied in making so exquisite a choice of all that was there to be found amiable of every kind that it was not much less chimerical than the imaginary world I had abandoned.

I figured to myself love and friendship, the two idols of my heart, under the most ravishing images. I pleased myself in adorning them with all the charms of the sex I had always adored. I imagined two female friends, rather than two of my own sex, because, although the example be more rare, it is also more lovable. I endowed them with different but analogous characters, with two faces, not perfectly beautiful, but according to my taste, and animated with benevolence and sensibility. I made one brown and the other fair, one lively and the other languishing, one wise and the other weak, but of so amiable a weakness that it seemed to add a charm to virtue. I gave to one of the two a lover, of whom the other was a tender friend,

and even something more, but I did not admit rivalry, or quarrels, or jealousy, because every painful sentiment is painful to me to imagine, and I was unwilling to tarnish this smiling picture by anything which was degrading to nature. Smitten with my two charming models, I identified myself with the lover and friend as much as it was possible to do it, but I made him young and amiable, giving him at the same time the virtues and defects which I felt in myself.

That I might place my characters in a residence proper for them, I successively passed in review the most beautiful places that I had seen in my travels, but found no grove sufficiently fresh and verdant, no landscape sufficiently striking, to please me. The valleys of Thessaly would have satisfied me had I but once seen them; but my imagination, fatigued with invention, wished for some real place which might serve it as a point to rest upon, and create in me an illusion with respect to the real existence of the inhabitants I intended to place there. I thought a good while upon the Boromean Islands, the delightful prospect of which had transported me, but I found in them too much art and ornament for my personages. However, I required a lake, and concluded by making choice of that about which my heart has never ceased to wander. I fixed upon that part of the banks of this lake where my wishes have long since placed my residence in the imaginary happiness to which fate has confined me. The native place of my poor Mamma had still for me

a charm. The contrast of the situations, the richness and variety of the sites, the magnificence, the majesty of the whole, which ravishes the senses, affects the heart, and elevates the soul, determined me to give it the preference, and I placed my young pupils at Vevai. This is what I imagined at the first sketch; the rest was not added until afterwards.

I for a long time confined myself to this vague plan, because it was sufficient to fill my imagination with agreeable objects, and my heart with sentiments that it loves to nourish. These fictions, by frequently presenting themselves, at length gained more consistence, and took in my mind a determined form. I then had an inclination to express upon paper some of the situations that fancy presented to me, and, recalling everything I had felt during my youth, this, in some measure, gave free scope to that desire of loving which I had never been able to satisfy, and by which I felt myself consumed.

I first penned a few scattered letters, without connection or sequence, and when I afterwards wished to arrange them I was often greatly embarrassed. What is scarcely credible, and yet very true, is my having written the two first parts almost wholly in this manner, without having any well-formed plan, and not foreseeing that I should one day be tempted to make it a regular work. For this reason the two parts afterwards formed, of materials not prepared for the place in which they are disposed, are seen to be filled with a kind of verbiage not found in the others.



In the midst of my reveries I had a visit from Madame d'Houdetot, the first she had ever made me, but which unfortunately was not the last, as will hereafter appear. The Comtesse d'Houdetot was the daughter of the late Monsieur de Bellegarde, a former-general, sister to Monsieur d'Épinay and to Messieurs de Lalive and de La Briche, both of whom have since filled the post of introducers of ambassadors. I have spoken of the acquaintance I made with her before she was married; since that event I had not seen her, except at the fêtes of La Chevrette, with Madame d'Épinay, her sister-in-law. Having frequently passed several days with her, both at La Chevrette and Épinay, I not only always thought her very amiable, but I seemed also to perceive that she was my well-wisher. She was fond of walking with me; we were both good walkers, and the conversation between us did not flag. However, I never went to see her in Paris, although she had several times requested, and even solicited, me to do so. Her connection with Monsieur de Saint-Lambert, with whom I began to be intimate, rendered her more interesting to me, and it was to bring me some account of that friend, who was, I believe, then at Manon, that she came to see me at the Hermitage.

This visit had something of the appearance of the beginning of a romance. She lost her way. Her coachman, quitting the road, which turned, attempted to cross straight over from the mill of Clairvaux to the Hermitage. Her carriage stuck in a quagmire in the bottom of the valley, and she resolved to walk the rest

of the way. Her delicate shoes were soon worn through; she sank into the dirt; her servants had the greatest difficulty in extricating her; and she at length arrived at the Hermitage in boots, making the place resound with her laughter, in which I most heartily joined. She had to change everything. Thérèse provided her with what was necessary, and I prevailed upon her to forget her dignity and partake of a rustic collation, with which she seemed highly satisfied. It was late, and her stay was short, but the interview was so mirthful that her fancy was agreeably engaged, and she seemed disposed to return. She did not, however, put this project into execution until the next year; but, alas! the delay was no protection to me.

I passed the autumn in an employment that no person would suspect me of undertaking: this was guarding the fruit of Monsieur d'Épinay. The Hermitage was the reservoir of the waters of the park of La Chevrette; there was a garden walled round and planted with espaliers and other trees, which produced Monsieur d'Épinay more fruit than his kitchen-garden at La Chevrette, although three-fourths of it were stolen from him. That I might not be a guest entirely useless, I took upon myself the direction of the garden and the inspection of the gardener's conduct. Everything went on well until the fruit season, but as the produce became ripe I observed that it disappeared without knowing in what manner it was disposed of. The gardener assured me it was the dormice that ate up all. I declared war against them, and

destroyed a great number of these animals, notwithstanding which the fruit still diminished. I watched so closely that at last I found the gardener himself to be the great dormouse. He lodged at Montmorency, whence he came in the night with his wife and children to take away the fruit he had concealed in the daytime, and which he sold in the market at Paris as publicly as though he had brought it from a garden of his own. This wretch, whom I loaded with kindness, whose children were clothed by Thérèse, and whose father, who was a beggar, I almost supported, robbed us with as much ease as effrontery, not one of the three being sufficiently vigilant to prevent him, and in a single night he emptied my cellar, as I saw in the morning. Whilst he seemed to address himself to me only, I suffered everything; but, being desirous of giving an account of the fruit, I was obliged to denounce the robber. Madame d'Épinay desired me to pay and discharge him, and look out for another. I did so. As this rascal rambled about the Hermitage every night, armed with a thick staff with an iron ferrule--rather, indeed, a big club--and accompanied by other villains like himself, to relieve the *gouverneuses* from their fears I made his successor sleep always at the Hermitage; and, this not being sufficient to remove their apprehensions, I sent to ask Madame d'Épinay for a musket, which I kept in the gardener's chamber, with an order not to make use of it unless an attempt were made to break open the door or scale the garden walls, and to

fire nothing but powder, meaning only to frighten the thieves. This was certainly the least precaution a man indisposed could take for the common safety, having to pass the winter in the midst of a wood with two timid women. I also procured a little dog to serve as a sentinel. Deleyre coming to see me about this time, I related to him my situation, and we laughed together at my military apparatus. At his return to Paris he sought to amuse Diderot with the story, and by this means the Coterie Holbachique learned that I was seriously disposed to pass the winter at the Hermitage. This perseverance, of which they had not imagined me to be capable, disconcerted them, and, until they could think of some other scheme for making my residence disagreeable to me, they sent back, by means of Diderot, the same Deleyre, who, though at first he had thought my precautions quite natural, ended by discovering that they were inconsistent with my principles and more than ridiculous, as he said in his letters, in which he overwhelmed me with plesantries sufficiently bitter and satirical to offend me, had I been so disposed. But at that time, being full of tender and affectionate sentiments, and not susceptible of any other, I perceived in his biting sarcasms nothing more than a jest, and believed him only jocose when others would have thought him utterly extravagant.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I wonder now at my stupidity in not having seen, when writing the above, that the ill-humour with which the Holbachians saw me go into the country, and remain there, had

By my care and vigilance I guarded the garden so well, that, although there had been but little fruit that year, the produce was triple that of the preceding years. It is true I spared no pains to preserve it, and I went so far as to escort what I sent to La Chevrette and to Épinay, and to carry baskets of it myself. I recollect that the aunt and I carried one of these, which was so heavy that, sinking beneath the burden, we were obliged to rest every ten steps, and when we arrived with it we were quite wet with perspiration.

[1757.] As soon as the inclement season began to confine me to the house, I wished to return to my indolent amusements, but this I found impossible. I had everywhere the two charming female friends before my eyes; their friend, their surroundings, the country they inhabited, and the objects created or embellished for them by my imagination. I was no longer myself for a moment; my delirium never left me. After many useless efforts to banish all these fictions from my mind, they at length wholly seduced me, and my future endeavours were confined to giving them order and coherence, for the purpose of converting them into a species of novel.

My greatest embarrassment was shame in regard principally to Madame Le Vasseur, whom they had no longer in their power as a guide to their systems of imposture, so far as exact time and place were concerned. This idea, which strikes me so long after the event, perfectly explains the strangeness of their conduct, which on any other ground is inexplicable.

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having contradicted myself so openly and fully. After the severe principles I had just so publicly asserted, after the austere maxims I had so loudly preached, and my bitter invectives against books which breathed nothing but effeminacy and love, could anything be less expected, or more extraordinary, than to see me, with my own hand, write my name in the list of authors of whose books I had so harshly censured? I felt this inconsistency in all its extent. I reproached myself with it, I blushed at it and was vexed; but all this could not bring me back to reason. Completely overcome, I was at all risks obliged to submit, and to resolve to brave the 'What will the world say of it?' but reserving my right of deliberating afterwards whether or not I should show my work, for I did not yet suppose I should ever determine to publish it.

This resolution taken, I entirely abandoned myself to my reveries, and, by frequently revolving these in my mind, formed with them the kind of plan of which the execution has been seen. This was certainly the greatest advantage that could be drawn from my follies: the love of good, which has never been effaced from my heart, turned them towards useful objects, the moral of which might have produced its good effects. My voluptuous descriptions would have lost all their graces had they been devoid of the fair tints of innocence.

A weak girl is an object of pity whom love may render interesting, and who frequently is not therefore the less amiable, but who can see without indignation the manners of the age;

and what is more disgusting than the pride of a faithless wife, who, openly treading under foot every duty, pretends that her husband ought to be extremely grateful for her unwillingness to suffer herself to be taken in the act? Perfect beings are not in nature, and their examples are not near enough to us. But that a young person born with a heart equally tender and virtuous, who suffers herself, when a girl, to be conquered by love, and when a woman, recovers strength of mind enough to conquer in her turn, and resume her virtue, whoever shall say that this picture taken as a whole is scandalous and useless, is a liar and a hypocrite; hearken not to him.

Besides this object of morality and conjugal chastity which is radically connected with all social order, I had in view one more secret in behalf of concord and public peace—a greater, and perhaps more important object in itself, at least as affairs stood at that moment. The storm raised by the *Encyclopedie*, far from being appeased, was at this time at its height. Two parties, exasperated against each other to the last degree of fury, soon resembled enraged wolves set on for their mutual destruction, rather than Christians and philosophers who had a reciprocal wish to enlighten and convince each other, and lead their brethren to the way of truth. Perhaps nothing more was wanting to each party than a few turbulent chiefs, who possessed a little power, to make this quarrel degenerate into a civil war; and God knows what a civil war of religion founded on each side upon the most cruel intolerance would have

produced. Naturally an enemy to all party spirit, I had freely spoken to each severe truths to which they had not listened. I thought of another expedient, which, in my simplicity, appeared to me admirable: this was, to abate their reciprocal hatred by destroying their prejudices, and showing to each party the virtue and merit which in the other was worthy of public esteem and the respect of mankind. This project, little remarkable for its wisdom, which supposed sincerity in man, and whereby I fell into the error with which I reproached the Abbe de Saint-Pierre, had the success that was to be expected from it. it drew together and united the parties only for the purpose of crushing me. Until experience made me discover my folly, I gave my attention to it with a zeal worthy of the motive by which I was inspired; and I imagined the two characters of Wolmar and Julie in an ecstasy which made me hope to render them both amiable, and, what is still more, by means of each other.

Satisfied with having made a rough sketch of my plan, I returned to the situations in detail which I had marked out, and from the arrangement I gave them resulted the first two parts of the *Julie*, which I finished during the winter with inexpressible pleasure, procuring gilt paper to receive a fair copy of them, azure and silver powder to dry the writing, and narrow blue ribbon to tack my sheets together; in a word, I thought nothing sufficiently elegant and delicate for my two charming girls, of whom, like another Pygmalion, I became madly enamoured.



Every evening, by the fire-side, I read the two parts to the *gouverneuses*. The daughter, without saying a word, was, like myself, moved to tenderness, and we mingled our sighs; her mother, finding there were no compliments, understood nothing of the matter, remained unmoved, and, at the intervals when I was silent, simply repeated, 'Monsieur, that is very fine.'

Madame d'Épinay, uneasy at my being alone in winter, in a solitary house in the midst of woods, often sent to inquire after my health. I never had such real proofs of her friendship for me, to which mine never more fully answered. It would be wrong in me were not I, among these proofs, to make special mention of her portrait, which she sent me, at the same time requesting instructions from me as to the means whereby she might procure mine, painted by Latour, and which had been shown at the Salon. I ought equally to speak of another proof of her attention to me, which, although it is laughable, is a feature in the history of my character, on account of the impression received from it. One day, when it froze to an extreme degree, in opening a packet that she had sent me containing several things I had desired her to purchase for me, I found a little under-petticoat of English flannel, which she told me she had worn, and desired I would make of it an under-waistcoat. The language of her note was charming, full of unaffected kindness. This consideration, more than friendly, appeared to me so tender, as if she had stripped herself to clothe me, that, in my emotion, I

repeatedly kissed—shedding tears at the same time—both the note and the petticoat. Therèse thought me mad. It is singular that, of all the marks of friendship that Madame d'Épinay ever showed me, none ever touched me as this did, and that, ever since our rupture, I have never recollected it without being very sensibly affected. I for a long time preserved her little note, and it would still have been in my possession had it not shared the fate of my other notes received at the same period.<sup>1</sup>

Although my disorder then gave me but little respite in winter, and during a part of the interval I had to seek relief from appliances, this was still, upon the whole, the season which, since my residence in France, I had passed with most pleasure and tranquillity. During four or five months, whilst the bad weather sheltered me from the interruptions of importunate visits, I tasted to a greater degree than I had ever yet, or have since done, that equable, simple, and independent life, the enjoyment of which still made it the more desirable to me, without any other company than the two *gouverneuses* in reality and the two female cousins in idea. It was then especially that I daily congratulated myself upon the resolution I had had the good sense to take, unmindful of the clamours of my friends, who were vexed at seeing me delivered from their tyranny; and when I heard of the criminal attempt of a madman,<sup>2</sup> when Deleyre

<sup>1</sup> See *Mémoires de Madame d'Épinay*, vol. II. p. 347

<sup>2</sup> The attempted assassination of Louis xv. by Damiens on January 4th, 1757.

and Madame d'Épinay spoke to me in their letters of the troubles and agitation which reigned in Paris, how thankful was I to Heaven for having placed me at a distance from all such spectacles of horror and guilt! These would have continued and increased the bilious humour which the sight of public disorders had given me; while, seeing nothing around me in my retirement but gay and pleasing objects, my heart was wholly abandoned to amiable sentiments. I here note with pleasure the course of the last peaceful moments left to me. The spring succeeding to this winter, which had been so calm, developed the germs of the misfortunes I have yet to describe, in the tissue of which a like interval, wherein I had leisure to respire, will not be found.

I think, however, I can recall to mind that, during this interval of peace, and even in the bosom of my solitude, I was not quite undisturbed by the Holbachians. Diderot stirred up some strife against me, and I am much deceived if it was not in the course of this winter that *Le Fils Naturel*, of which I shall soon have occasion to speak, made its appearance. Not only, from causes which will afterwards be known, have I few records of that period, but those even which have been left in my possession are not very exact with respect to dates. Diderot never dated his letters. Madame d'Épinay and Madame d'Houdetot seldom dated theirs, except the day of the week, and Deleyre mostly confined himself to the same rules. When I was desirous of putting these letters

in order, I was obliged to supply, by guessing, dates so uncertain that I cannot depend upon them. Unable, therefore, to fix with certainty the beginning of these quarrels, I prefer relating in one subsequent article everything I can recollect concerning them.

The return of spring had increased my fond delirium, and in my erotic transports I had composed for the last parts of *Julie* several letters, wherein evident marks of the rapture in which I wrote them are found. Amongst others, I may quote those from the Élysee, and the excursion upon the lake, which, if my memory does not deceive me, are at the end of the fourth part. Whoever, in reading these letters, does not feel his heart soften and melt into the tenderness by which they were dictated, ought to lay down the book : nature has refused him the means of judging of sentiment.

Precisely at the same time I received a second unforeseen visit from Madame d'Houdetot. In the absence of her husband, who was captain of the gendarmerie, and of her lover, who was also in the service, she had come to Eaubonne, in the midst of the Valley of Montmorency, where she had taken a pretty house, and thence she made a new excursion to the Hermitage. She came on horseback, and dressed in men's clothes. Although I am not very fond of this kind of masquerade, I was struck with the romantic appearance she made, and for once it was with love. As this was the first and only time in all my life, and the consequences will for ever render it terrible to my remembrance, I must

take permission to enter into some particulars on the subject.

Madame la Comtesse d'Houdetot was nearly thirty years of age, and not handsome; her face was marked by the small-pox, her complexion coarse, she was short-sighted, and her eyes were rather round; nevertheless she had a youthful air, and her physiognomy, possessing vivacity and sweetness, was attractive. She had an abundance of long black hair, which hung down in natural curls much below her waist; her figure was neatly formed, and she was at once awkward and graceful in her movements; her wit was natural and pleasing; gaiety, heedlessness, and ingenuousness were happily combined; she abounded in charming sallies, which were so little premeditated that they sometimes escaped her lips in spite of herself. She possessed several agreeable talents, played the harpsichord, danced well, and wrote pleasing poetry. Her character was angelic; this was founded upon a sweetness of mind, and, except prudence and fortitude, contained in it every virtue. She was besides so much to be depended upon in all intercourse, so faithful in society, that even her enemies were not under the necessity of concealing from her their secrets. I mean by her enemies the men, or rather the women, by whom she was not beloved—for as to herself, she had not a heart capable of hatred; and I am of opinion that this conformity with mine greatly contributed towards inspiring me with a passion for her. In confidential interviews of the most intimate friendship I never heard her speak ill

of persons who were absent, not even of her sister-in-law. She could neither conceal her thoughts from any one nor disguise any of her sentiments; and I am persuaded that she spoke of her lover to her husband as she spoke of him to her friends and acquaintance, and to all the world. What proved, beyond all manner of doubt, the purity and sincerity of her nature was that, being subject to very extraordinary absences of mind, and the most laughable mistakes, she was often guilty of some very imprudent ones with respect to herself, but never in the least offensive to any other.

She had been married very young and against her inclinations to the Comte d'Houdetot, a man of fashion, and a good officer, but a man who loved play and intrigue, who was not very lovable, and whom she never loved. She found in Monsieur de Saint-Lambert all the merit of her husband, with more agreeable qualities of mind, wit, virtue, and talents. If anything in the manners of the time can be pardoned, it is surely an attachment which duration renders more pure, to which its effects do honour, and which becomes cemented by reciprocal esteem.

It was a little from inclination, as I am disposed to think, but much more to please Saint-Lambert, that she came to see me. He had requested her to do it; and there was reason to believe that the friendship which began to be established between us would render this society agreeable to all three. She knew I was acquainted with their relation, and, as she could speak to me without restraint, it was natural

she should find my conversation agreeable. She came ; I saw her ; I was intoxicated with love without an object ; this intoxication fascinated my eyes ; the object fixed itself upon her ; I saw my Julie in Madame d'Houdetot, and I soon saw nothing but Madame d'Houdetot, but with all the perfections with which I had just adorned the idol of my heart. To complete my delirium she spoke to me of Saint-Lambert with the fondness of a passionate lover. Contagious force of love ! while listening to her and finding myself near her, I was seized with a delicious trembling which I had never experienced before when near to any person whatsoever. She spoke, and I felt myself affected. I thought I was only interested by her sentiments, when I perceived I possessed those which were similar. I drank freely of the poisoned cup, of which I yet tasted nothing more than the sweetness. Finally, imperceptibly to us both, she inspired me for herself with all that she expressed for her lover. Alas ! it was very late in life ; and cruel was it to consume with a passion not less violent than unfortunate, for a woman whose heart was already filled with love for another.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary emotions I had felt when in her company, I did not at first perceive what had happened to me ; it was not until after her departure that, wishing to think of Julie, I was struck with surprise at being unable to think of anything but Madame d'Houdetot. Then were my eyes opened : I felt my misfortune and lamented what had

happened, but I did not foresee the consequences.

I hesitated a long time on the manner in which I should conduct myself towards her, as if real love left one sufficient reason to deliberate and act accordingly. I had not yet determined upon this when she unexpectedly returned and found me unprovided. Then I was instructed. Shame, the companion of evil, rendered me dumb and made me tremble in her presence. I dared neither to open my mouth nor to raise my eyes. I was in an inexpressible confusion, which it was impossible she should not perceive. I resolved to confess to her my state of mind, and leave her to guess the cause : this was telling her in terms sufficiently clear.

Had I been young and lovable, and Madame d'Houdetot afterwards weak, I should here blame her conduct ; but this was not the case, and I am obliged to applaud and admire it. The resolution she took was equally prudent and generous. She could not suddenly break with me without giving her reasons for it to Saint-Lambert, who himself had desired her to come and see me ; this would have exposed two friends to a rupture, and perhaps a public one, which she wished to avoid. She had for me esteem and good wishes : she pitied my folly without encouraging it, and endeavoured to restore me to reason. She was glad to preserve to her lover and herself a friend for whom she had some respect, and she spoke of nothing with more pleasure than the intimate and agreeable society we might form between us three when I should become reasonable. She



did not always confine herself to these friendly exhortations, and, in case of need, did not spare me more severe reproaches, which I had richly deserved.

I spared myself still less. The moment I was alone I began to recover. I was more calm after my declaration : love known to the person by whom it is inspired becomes more supportable. The forcible manner in which I reproached myself with mine ought to have cured me of it, had the thing been possible. What powerful motives did I not call to my aid to stifle it ! My morals, sentiments, and principles, the shame, the treachery, and crime of abusing what was confided to friendship, and, in fine, the ridiculousness of burning, at my age, with extravagant passion for an object whose heart was pre-engaged, and who could neither afford me any return nor the least hope : moreover, with a passion which, far from having anything to gain by constancy, daily became less sufferable.

Who would imagine that this last consideration, which ought to have added weight to all the others, was that whereby I eluded them ? What scruple, thought I, ought I to make of a folly prejudicial to nobody but myself ? Am I, then, a young gentleman of whom Madame d'Houdetot ought to be afraid ? Would not it be said satirically, in answer to my presumptuous remorse, that my gallantry, manner, and style of dress must seduce her ? Poor Jean-Jacques, love on at thy ease, with a good conscience, and be not afraid that thy sighs will be prejudicial to Saint-Lambert !

It has been seen that I never was enterprising, not even in my youth. Thinking so was according to my turn of mind ; it flattered my passion. This was sufficient to induce me to abandon myself to it without reserve, and to laugh even at the impertinent scruple that I thought I had made from vanity rather than from reason. This is a great lesson for virtuous minds, which vice never attacks openly : it finds means to surprise them by masking itself with some sophism, and not unfrequently some virtue.

Guilty without remorse, I soon became so without measure ; and I entreat the reader to observe in what manner my passion followed my nature, at length to plunge me into an abyss. In the first place, it assumed an air of humility to encourage me ; and to render me intrepid it carried this humility even to mistrust. Madame d'Houdetot, incessantly putting me in mind of my duty, without once for a single moment flattering my folly, treated me, on the other hand, with the greatest kindness, and adopted towards me the tone of the most tender friendship. This friendship would, I protest, have satisfied my wishes, had I thought it sincere ; but, finding it too pronounced to be real, I took it into my head that love, so ill-suited to my age and appearance, had rendered me contemptible in the eyes of Madame d'Houdetot, that this young flighty creature only wished to divert herself with me and my superannuated passion, that she had communicated this to Saint-Lambert, and that the indig-

nation caused by my breach of friendship having made her lover enter into her views, they were agreed to turn my head and then to laugh at me. This folly, which at twenty-six years of age had made me guilty of extravagant behaviour with Madame de Larnage, whom I did not know, would have been pardonable in me at forty-five with Madame d'Houdetot, had not I known that she and her lover were persons of too generous a disposition to indulge in such a barbarous amusement.

Madame d'Houdetot continued her visits, which I delayed not to return. She, as well as myself, was fond of walking, and we took long walks in an enchanting country. Satisfied with loving and daring to say I loved, I should have been in the most agreeable situation had not my extravagance spoiled all its charm. She could not at first comprehend the foolish pettishness with which I received her attentions, but my heart, incapable of concealing what passed in it, did not long leave her ignorant of my suspicions. She endeavoured to laugh at them; but this expedient did not succeed: transports of rage would have been the consequence, and she changed her tone. Her compassionate gentleness was invincible. She made me reproaches which penetrated my heart; she expressed an inquietude at my unjust fears, of which I took advantage. I required proofs of her being in earnest. She perceived there were no other means of relieving me of my apprehensions. It became pressing: the step was delicate. It is astonishing, and perhaps without example, that

a woman, having suffered herself to be brought to terms, should have got herself off so well. She refused me nothing the most tender friendship could grant; she granted me nothing that rendered her unfaithful; and I had the mortification of seeing that the disorder into which her most trifling favours had thrown all my senses had not lighted up the least spark in hers.

I have somewhere said<sup>1</sup> that nothing should be granted to the senses when we wish to refuse them anything. To prove how false this maxim was relative to Madame d'Houdetot, and how far she was right in depending upon her own strength of mind, it would be necessary to enter into the detail of our long and frequent conversations, and follow them, in all their liveliness, during the four months we passed together in an intimacy almost without example between two friends of different sexes who contain themselves within the bounds which we never exceeded. Ah! if I had lived so long without feeling the power of real love, my heart and senses abundantly paid the arrears. What, therefore, are the transports we feel with the object of our affections by whom we are beloved, if even an unshared passion can inspire such as I felt!

But I am wrong in calling it an unshared love; that which I felt was so in some measure: love was equal on both sides, but not reciprocal. We were both intoxicated with the passion—she for her lover, and I for herself; our sighs and delicious tears were mingled together.

<sup>1</sup> *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, part iii. 18.

Tender confidants of the secrets of each other, there was so great a similarity in our sentiments that it was impossible they should not find some common point of union; and yet in the midst of this delicious intoxication she never forgot herself for a moment; and I solemnly protest that if ever, led away by my senses, I may have attempted to render her unfaithful, I was never really desirous of succeeding. The very vehemence of my passion restrained it within bounds. The duty of self-denial had elevated my soul. The lustre of every virtue adorned in my eyes the idol of my heart; to have soiled the divine image would have been to destroy it. I might have committed the crime. it has been a hundred times committed in my heart; but to dishonour my Sophie! Ah! was this ever possible? No! I have told her a hundred times it was not. Had I had it in my power to satisfy my desires, had she consented to commit herself to my discretion, I should, except in a few moments of delirium, have refused to be happy at such a price. I loved her too well to wish to possess her.

The distance from the Hermitage to Eau-bonne is almost a league; in my frequent excursions to it I sometimes slept there. One evening, after having supped together, we went to walk in the garden under a brilliant moon. At the bottom of the garden was a considerable copse, through which we passed on our way to a pretty grove ornamented with a cascade, of which I had given her the idea, and she had procured it to be executed accordingly. Eternal



A MOONLIGHT TALK



remembrance of innocence and enjoyment ! It was in this grove that, seated by her side upon a bank of turf under an acacia in full bloom, I found for the emotions of my heart a language worthy of them. It was the first and only time in my life ; but I was sublime, if everything amiable and seductive with which the most tender and ardent love can inspire the heart of man can be so called. What intoxicating tears did I shed upon her knees ! how many did I make her shed unwillingly ! At length in an involuntary transport she exclaimed : ' No, never was a man so amiable, nor ever was there lover who loved like you ! But your friend Saint-Lambert hears us, and my heart is incapable of loving twice.' I sighed and was silent. I embraced her - what an embrace ! But this was all. She had lived alone for the last six months—that is, absent from her lover and her husband, I had seen her almost every day during three months, and Love never failed to make a third. We had supped *tête-à-tête*, we were alone, in a grove by moonlight, and after two hours of the most lively and tender conversation, at midnight she left this grove, and the arms of her lover, as morally and physically pure as she had entered it. Reader, weigh all these circumstances ; I will add no more.

Do not, however, imagine that in this situation my passions left me as undisturbed as I was with Thérèse and Mamma. I have already observed that I was at this time inspired not only with love, but with love in all its energy and all its fury. I will not describe either the



agitations, tremblings, palpitations, convulsionary emotions, or faintings of the heart, I continually experienced; these may be judged of by the effect her image alone made upon me. I have observed the distance from the Hermitage to Eaubonne was considerable. I went by the hills of Andilly, which are delightful; I mused, as I walked, on her whom I was going to see, the affectionate reception she would give me, and upon the kiss which awaited me at my arrival. This single, this fatal kiss,<sup>1</sup> even before I received it, inflamed my blood to such a degree as to affect my head; my eyes were dazzled, my knees trembled, and were unable to support me; I was obliged to stop and sit down; my whole frame was in inconceivable disorder, and I was upon the point of fainting. Knowing the danger, I endeavoured in setting out to divert my attention from the object, and think of something else. I had not proceeded twenty steps before the same recollection, and all its consequences, assailed me in such a manner that it was impossible to avoid them; and in spite of all my efforts I do not believe that I ever made this excursion alone with impunity. I arrived at Eaubonne weak, exhausted, and scarcely able to support myself. The moment I saw her everything was repaired; all I felt in her presence was the importunity of an inexhaustible and useless ardour. Upon the road to Eaubonne there was a pleasant terrace called Mont Olympe, at which we sometimes met. I was first to arrive; it was proper that

<sup>1</sup> *Childe Harold*, iii. 79.

I should wait for her ; but how dear this waiting cost me ! To divert my attention, I endeavoured to write with my pencil notes which I could have written with the purest drops of my blood ; I never could finish one that was legible. When she found one of these in the niche upon which we had agreed, all she could learn from the contents was the deplorable state in which I was when I wrote it. This state, and its continuation during three months of irritation and self-denial, so exhausted me that it was several years before I recovered from it ; and at the end of these it left me an ailment which I shall carry with me, or which will carry me, to the grave. Such was the sole enjoyment of a man of the most inflammable constitution, but, at the same time, perhaps one of the most timid mortals that nature ever produced. Such were the last happy days that were meted out to me upon earth ; here begins the long train of evils, in which there will be found but little interruption.

It has been seen that, during the whole course of my life, my heart, as transparent as crystal, has never been capable of concealing for the space of a moment any sentiment in the least lively which had taken refuge in it. Let it be guessed whether it was possible for me long to conceal my affection for Madame d'Houdetot. Our intimacy struck the eyes of everybody ; we did not make of it either a secret or a mystery. It was not of a nature to require any such precaution ; and, as Madame d'Houdetot had for me the most tender friendship, with

which she did not reproach herself, and I for her an esteem with the justice of which nobody was better acquainted than myself—she frank, absent, heedless ; I true, awkward, haughty, impatient, and choleric—we exposed ourselves more in deceitful security than we should have done had we been culpable. We both went to La Chevrette, often in company ; we sometimes met there by appointment. We lived there according to our accustomed manner, walking together every day, talking of our amours, our duties, our friend, and our innocent projects—all this in the park, opposite the apartment of Madame d'Épinay, under her windows, whence incessantly examining us and thinking herself braved, she glutted her heart through her eyes with rage and indignation.

All women have the art of concealing their anger, especially when it is great. Madame d'Épinay, violent but deliberate, possessed this art to an eminent degree. She feigned not to see or suspect anything ; and at the same time that she doubled towards me her cares, attentions, and allurements, she affected to load her sister-in-law with incivilities and marks of disdain, which she seemingly wished to communicate to me. It will easily be imagined she did not succeed ; but I was on the rack. Torn by opposite passions, at the same time that I was sensible of her caresses, I could scarcely contain my anger when I saw her wanting in good manners to Madame d'Houdetot. The angelic sweetness of the latter made her endure everything without a complaint or even

without being offended. She was, besides, often so absent and always so little attentive to these things, that half the time she did not perceive them.

I was so taken up with my passion, that, seeing nothing but Sophie (one of the names of Madame d'Houdetot), I did not even perceive that I was become the laughing-stock of the whole house, and all those who came to it. The Baron d'Holbach, who never, so far as I knew, had been at La Chevrette, was one of the latter. Had I at that time been as mistrustful as I am since become, I should have strongly suspected Madame d'Épinay to have contrived this journey to give the Baron the amusing spectacle of the amorous citizen. But I was then so stupid that I saw not even that which was glaring to everybody. My stupidity did not, however, prevent me from finding in the Baron a more jovial and satisfied appearance than ordinary. Instead of looking upon me with his usual moroseness, he said to me a hundred jocose things without my knowing what he meant. Surprise was painted in my countenance, but I said not a word; Madame d'Épinay shook her sides with laughing; I knew not what possessed them. As nothing yet passed the bounds of pleasantry, the best thing I could have done, had I been in the secret, would have been to have humoured the joke. It is true, I perceived amid the rallying gaiety of the Baron that his eyes sparkled with a malicious joy, which would have given me pain had I then remarked it to the degree in which it has since recurred to my recollection.

One day when I went to see Madame d'Houdetot at Eaubonne after her return from one of her journeys to Paris, I found her melancholy, and observed that she had been weeping. I was obliged to put a restraint on myself, because Madame de Blainville, sister to her husband, was present ; but the moment I found an opportunity I expressed to her my uneasiness. 'Ah !' said she, with a sigh, 'I am much afraid your follies will cost me the repose of the rest of my days. Saint-Lambert has been informed of what has passed, and is ill informed of it. He does me justice, but he is vexed ; and, what is still worse, he conceals part of his vexation. Fortunately I have not concealed from him anything relative to our connection, which was formed under his auspices. My letters, like my heart, were full of yourself. I made him acquainted with everything except your extravagant passion, of which I hoped to cure you, and which, though he does not speak, I perceive he imputes to me as a crime. Somebody has done us ill offices ; I have been injured, but what does that signify ? Either let us break entirely with each other, or do you be what you ought to be ; I will not in future have anything to conceal from my lover.'

This was the first moment in which I was sensible of the shame of feeling myself humbled by the sentiment of my fault, in presence of a young woman, the justness of whose reproaches I inwardly confessed, and to whom I ought to have been a Mentor. The indignation I felt against myself would, perhaps, have been suffi-

cient to overcome my weakness, had not the tender passion inspired in me by the victim of it again softened my heart. Alas! was this a moment to harden it when it was overflowed by the tears which penetrated it in every part? This tenderness was soon changed into rage against the vile informers, who had seen nothing but the evil of a criminal but involuntary sentiment, without believing, or even imagining, the sincere uprightness of heart by which it was counteracted. We did not remain long in doubt about the hand by which the blow was directed.

We both knew that Madame d'Épinay corresponded with Saint-Lambert. This was not the first storm she had raised up against Madame d'Houdetot, from whom she had made a thousand efforts to detach her lover, the success of some of which made the consequences to be dreaded. Besides, Grimm, who I think had accompanied Monsieur de Castries to the army, was in Westphalia, as well as Saint-Lambert; they sometimes visited one another. Grimm had made some attempts on Madame d'Houdetot, which had not succeeded, and being extremely piqued, suddenly discontinued his visits to her. Let it be judged with what calmness, modest as he is known to be, he supposed she preferred to him a man older than himself, and of whom, since Grimm had frequented the great, he had never spoken but as a person whom he patronised.

My suspicions of Madame d'Épinay were changed into a certainty when I heard what had passed in my own house. When I was at La Chevrette, Thérèse frequently came there,

either to bring me letters or to pay me that attention which my ill state of health rendered necessary. Madame d'Épinay had asked her if Madame d'Houdetot and I did not write to each other. Upon her answering in the affirmative, Madame d'Épinay pressed her to give her the letters of Madame d'Houdetot, assuring her that she would rescal them in such a manner that it should never be known. Thérèse, without showing how much she was shocked at the proposition, and without even putting me upon my guard, did nothing more than conceal the letters she brought me more carefully—a lucky precaution, for Madame d'Épinay had her watched when she arrived, and, waiting for her in the passage, several times carried her audaciousness as far as to examine her tucker. She did more than this: having one day invited herself with Monsieur de Margency to dinner at the Hermitage, for the first time since I had resided there, she seized the moment when I was walking with Margency to go into my closet with the mother and daughter and to press them to show her the letters of Madame d'Houdetot. Had the mother known where the letters were, they would have been given to her; but, fortunately, the daughter was the only person who was in the secret, and denied my having preserved any of them,—an honest, faithful, and generous falsehood, whilst truth would have been a perfidy. Madame d'Épinay perceiving Thérèse was not to be seduced, endeavoured to irritate her by jealousy, reproaching her with her easy temper and blindness. 'How is it possible,'

said she to her, 'that you do not perceive there is a criminal intercourse between them? If besides what strikes your eyes you stand in need of other proofs, lend your assistance to obtain that which may furnish them. You say he tears up the letters from Madaine d'Houdetot as soon as he has read them. Well, carefully gather up the pieces and give them to me; I will take upon myself to put them together.' Such were the lessons my friend gave to my dear associate.

Thérèse had the discretion to conceal from me, for a considerable time, all these attempts; but, perceiving how much I was perplexed, she thought herself obliged to inform me of everything, to the end that, knowing with whom I had to do, I might take measures to secure myself against plots then on foot. My rage and indignation are not to be described. Instead of dissembling with Madame d'Épinay according to her own example, and making use of counterplots, I abandoned myself without reserve to the natural impetuosity of my temper, and with my accustomed inconsiderateness came to an open rupture. My imprudence may be judged of by the following letters, which sufficiently show the manner of proceeding of both parties on this occasion:—

NOTE FROM MADAME D'ÉPINAY (A, No. 44).

'Why do I not see you, my dear friend? You make me uneasy. You have so often promised me to do nothing but go and come between this place and the Hermitage! In this I have left you at liberty; and yet you have



suffered a week to pass without coming. Had I not been, told you were well, I should have imagined the contrary. I expected you either the day before yesterday or yesterday, but found myself disappointed. Heavens! what is the matter with you? You have no business, nor can you have any uneasiness; for, had this been the case, I flatter myself you would have come and confided it to me. You are, therefore, ill! Relieve me, I beseech you, speedily from my fears. Adieu, my dear friend! let this "adieu" produce me a "good-morning" from you.'

## ANSWER.

*'This (Wednesday) morning.*

'I cannot yet say anything to you. I wait to be better informed, and this I shall be sooner or later. In the meantime, be persuaded that innocence accused will find a defender sufficiently powerful to cause some repentance in the slanderers, be they who they may.'

## SECOND NOTE FROM THE SAME (A, No. 45).

'Do you know that your letter frightens me?' 'What does it mean? I have read it twenty times and more. In truth, I do not understand what it means. All I can perceive is, that you are uneasy and tormented, and that you wait until you are no longer so before you speak to me upon the subject. Is this, my dear friend, what we agreed upon? What, then, is become of that friendship and confidence, and by what means have I lost them? Is it with me or for me that you are angry? However this may be, come to me this evening, I conjure you: remember you promised me, no longer than a week ago, to let nothing remain upon your mind, but at once to speak freely to me. My dear friend, I live in that confidence—Stay, I have just read your letter again; I do not understand the contents better, but they make me tremble. You seem to be cruelly agitated. I could wish to calm your mind; but, as I am ignorant of the cause of your inquietude, I know not what to say, except that I am as wretched as yourself, and shall remain so until we meet. If you are not here this evening at six o'clock, I set off

to-morrow for the Hermitage, let the weather be how it will, and in whatever state of health I may be; for I can no longer support the anxiety I now feel. Good-day, my dear friend. At all risks, I take the liberty to tell you, without knowing whether or not you are in need of such advice, that you should endeavour to stop the inroads of inquietude in solitude. A fly becomes a monster; I have frequently experienced it.

## ANSWER.

*'This (Wednesday) evening.*

'I can neither come to see you nor receive your visit so long as my present inquietude continues. The confidence of which you speak no longer exists, and it will not be easy for you to recover it. I see nothing more in your present anxiety than the desire of drawing from the confessions of others some advantage agreeable to your views; and my heart, so ready to pour its overflowings into another which opens to receive them, is shut against trick and cunning. I distinguish your ordinary address in the difficulty you find in understanding my note. Do you think me dupe enough to believe that you have not comprehended what it meant? No; but I shall know how to overcome your subtleties by my frankness. I will explain myself more clearly, that you may understand me still less.

'Two lovers, closely united and worthy of each other's love, are dear to me; I expect you will not know whom I mean unless I name them. I presume attempts have been made to disunite them, and that I have been made use of to inspire one of the two with jealousy. The choice was not judicious, but it appeared convenient to the purposes of malice, and of this malice it is you whom I suspect to be guilty. I hope this becomes more clear.

'Thus the woman whom I most esteem would, with my knowledge, have been loaded with the infamy of dividing her heart and person between two lovers, and I with that of being one of these wretches. If I knew that, for a single moment in your life, you had ever thought this, either of her or myself, I should hate you until my last hour. But it is with having said, and not

with having thought it, that I charge you. In this case, I cannot comprehend which of the three you wished to injure; but if you love peace of mind, tremble lest you should have succeeded. I have not concealed, either from you or her, all the ill I think of certain connections; but I wish these to end by a means as virtuous as the cause, and that an illegitimate love may be changed into an eternal friendship. Should I, who never did ill to any person, be the innocent means of doing it to my friends? No; I should never forgive you; I should become your irreconcilable enemy. Your secrets are all I should respect; for I will never be a man without honour.

‘I do not apprehend that my present perplexity will continue a long time. I shall soon know whether or not I am deceived. I shall then, perhaps, have great injuries to repair, which I will do with as much cheerfulness as that with which the most agreeable act of my life has been accompanied. But do you know in what manner I will make amends for my faults during the short space of time I have to remain near you? By doing what nobody but myself would do—by telling you freely what the world thinks of you, and the breaches you have to repair in your reputation. Notwithstanding all the pretended friends by whom you are surrounded, the moment you see me depart, you may bid adieu to truth, you will no longer find any person who will tell it to you.’

### THIRD LETTER FROM THE SAME (A, No. 46).

‘I did not understand your letter of this morning; this I told you because it was the case. I understand that of this evening; do not imagine that I shall ever return an answer to it; I am too anxious to forget what it contains; and, although you excite my pity, I am not proof against the bitterness with which it has filled my mind. I descend to trick and cunning with you! I accused of the blackest of all infamies! Adieu, I regret your having the—— adieu. I know not what I say——adieu! I shall be very anxious to forgive you. You will come when you please; you will be better received than your suspicions deserve. All I have to desire of you

is not to trouble yourself about my reputation. What people say of it matters little to me. My conduct is good, and this is sufficient for me. Besides, I am ignorant of what has happened to the two persons who are dear to me as they are to you?

This last letter extricated me from a terrible embarrassment, and threw me into another of little less magnitude. Although these letters and answers were sent and returned in the same day with an extreme rapidity, the interval had been sufficient to place another between my transports of rage, and to give me time to reflect on the enormity of my imprudence. Madame d'Houdetot had not recommended to me anything so much as to remain quiet, to leave her the care of extricating herself, and to avoid, especially at that moment, all noise and rupture; and I, by the most open and atrocious insults, was taking the surest means of carrying rage to its greatest height in the heart of a woman who was already but too well disposed to it. I now could naturally expect nothing from her but an answer so haughty, disdainful, and contemptuous, that I could not, without the utmost meanness, do otherwise than immediately quit her house. Happily she, more adroit than I was furious, avoided by the manner of her answer reducing me to that extremity. But it was necessary either to quit or immediately to see her; the alternative was inevitable. I resolved on the latter, though I foresaw how much I must be embarrassed in the explanation. For how was I to get through it without exposing either Madame d'Houdetot or Thérèse? and woe to

her whom I should name ! There was nothing that the vengeance of an implacable and an intriguing woman did not make me fear for the person who should be the object of it. It was to prevent this misfortune that in my letter I had spoken of nothing but suspicions, that I might not be under the necessity of producing my proofs. This, it is true, rendered my transports less excusable, no simple suspicions being sufficient to authorise me to treat a woman, and especially a friend, in the way I had treated Madame d'Épinay. But here begins the great and noble task I worthily fulfilled, of expiating my faults and secret weaknesses by charging myself with graver faults which I was incapable of committing, and which I never did commit.

I had not to bear the attack I had expected, and fear was the greatest evil I received from it. At my approach, Madame d'Épinay threw her arms about my neck, bursting into tears. This unexpected reception, and by an old friend, extremely affected me ; I also shed many tears. I said to her a few words which had not much meaning ; she uttered others with still less, and everything ended here. Supper was served ; we sat down to table, where, in the expectation of the explanation that I imagined to be deferred until supper was over, I made a very poor figure, for I am so overpowered by the most trifling inquietude of mind that I cannot conceal it from persons the least clear-sighted. My embarrassed appearance should have given her courage, yet she did not risk anything upon

that foundation. There was no more explanation after than before supper; none took place on the next day, and our conversations, with many intervals of silence, consisted of indifferent things, or some complimentary words on my part, by which, while I informed her I could not say more relative to my suspicions, I asserted, with the greatest truth, that if they were ill-founded my whole life should be employed in repairing the injustice. She did not show the least curiosity to know precisely what they were, nor for what reason I had formed them, and all our peace-making consisted on her part as well as mine in the embrace of our first meeting. Since Madame d'Épinay was the only person offended, at least in form, I thought it was not for me to strive to bring about a full explanation for which she herself did not seem anxious, and I returned as I had come; continuing, besides, to live with her upon the same footing as before, I soon almost entirely forgot the quarrel, and foolishly believed that she had forgotten it also, because she seemed to remember it no longer.

This, as it will soon appear, was not the only vexation caused me by weakness; but I had others not less acute, which I had not brought upon myself. The only cause of these was a desire of forcing me from my solitude,<sup>1</sup> by means of tormenting me. They originated

<sup>1</sup> That is, to take from it the old woman, who was wanted in the conspiracy. It is astonishing that during this long quarrel my stupid confidence prevented me from comprehending that it was not I but she whom they wanted at Paris.—R.

from Diderot and the Holbachians. Since I had resided at the Hermitage, Diderot had incessantly harassed me, either himself or by means of Deleyre; and I soon perceived, from the pleasantries of the latter upon my ramblings in the groves, with what pleasure he had travestied the hermit into the gallant shepherd. But this was not the question in my quarrels with Diderot; the causes of these were more serious. After the publication of *Le Fils Naturel* he had sent me a copy of it, which I had read with the interest and attention I ever bestow on the works of a friend. In reading the kind of poem in dialogue annexed to it, I was surprised and rather grieved to find in it, amongst several things disobliging but supportable against men living in solitude, this bitter and severe sentence without the least qualification: 'Il n'y a que le méchant qui soit seul.' This sentence is equivocal, and seems to present a double meaning—the one true, the other false—since it is impossible that a man who is determined to remain alone can do the least harm to anybody, and consequently he cannot be wicked. The sentence in itself therefore required an interpretation—the more so from an author who, when he sent it to the press, had a friend retired from the world. It appeared to me shocking and uncivil either to have forgotten that solitary friend, or, in remembering him, not to have made from the general maxim the honourable and just exception which he owed, not only to his friend, but to so many worthy sages, who, in all ages,

have sought for peace and tranquillity in retirement, and of whom, for the first time since the creation of the world, a writer took it into his head, with one stroke of his pen, indiscriminately to make so many villains.

I had a great affection and the most sincere esteem for Diderot, and fully depended upon his having the same sentiments for me. But, tired with his indefatigable obstinacy in continually opposing my inclinations, tastes, manner of living, and everything which concerned no person but myself; shocked at seeing a man younger than I was wish, at all events, to govern me like a child; disgusted with his facility in promising, and his negligence in performing; weary of so many appointments made by himself, and broken, while new ones were again capriciously made only to be again broken; displeased at uselessly waiting for him three or four times a month on the days he had assigned, and in dining alone at night after having gone to Saint-Denis to meet him, and waited the whole day for his coming—my heart was already full of these multiplied injuries. The last appeared to me still more serious, and gave me infinite pain. I wrote to complain of it, but in so mild and tender a manner that I moistened my paper with my tears, and my letter was sufficiently affecting to have drawn others from himself. One would never guess his answer on this subject; it was literally as follows (A, No. 33):—

‘I am glad my work has pleased and affected you. You are not of my opinion relative to hermits. Say as much



good of them as you please, you will be the only one in the world of whom I shall think well; even on this there would be much to say were it possible to speak to you without giving offence. A woman eighty years of age! etc. A phrase of a letter from a son of Madame d'Épinay—which, if I know you well, must have given you much pain—has been mentioned to me.'

The last two expressions of this letter want explanation.

Soon after I went to reside at the Hermitage, Madame Le Vasseur seemed dissatisfied with her situation, and to think the habitation too retired. Her remarks on this matter having been reported to me, I offered to send her back to Paris, if that was more agreeable to her, to pay her lodging, and to have the same care taken of her as if she remained with me. She rejected my offer, assured me she was well satisfied with the Hermitage, and that the country air was of service to her. This was evident, for, if I may so speak, she seemed to become young again, and enjoyed better health than at Paris. Her daughter told me that her mother would, on the whole, have been very sorry to quit the Hermitage, which was really a very delightful abode, being fond of the little employments of the garden and the care of the fruit, of which she had the handling, but that she had said what she had been desired to say to induce me to return to Paris.

Failing in this attempt, they endeavoured to obtain by a scruple the effect which complaisance had not produced, and construed into a crime

my keeping the old woman at a distance from the succours of which, at her age, she might be in need. They did not recollect that she and many other old people, whose lives are prolonged by the air of the country, might obtain these succours at Montmorency, near to which I lived; as if there were no old people except in Paris, and that it was impossible for them to live in any other place. Madame Le Vasseur, who ate a good deal, and with extreme voracity, was subject to overflowings of bile and to strong diarrhœas, which lasted several days, and served her as a remedy. At Paris she neither did nor took anything for them, but left nature to itself. She observed the same rule at the Hermitage, knowing it was the best thing she could do. No matter, since there were not in the country either physicians or apothecaries, keeping her there must, no doubt, be with a desire to end her existence, although she was in perfect health. Diderot should have determined at what age, under pain of being punished for homicide, it is no longer permitted to let old people remain out of Paris.

This was one of the two atrocious accusations from which he did not except me in his remark—that none but the wicked were alone; and the meaning of his pathetic exclamation with the *et cetera* which he had benignantly added: ‘A woman of eighty years of age! etc.’

I thought the best answer that could be given to this reproach would be from Madame Le Vasseur herself. I desired her to write freely and naturally her sentiments to Madame

d'Épinay. To relieve her from all constraint I would not see her letter, and I showed her that which I am going to transcribe. I wrote it to Madame d'Épinay, upon the subject of an answer I wished to return to a letter from Diderot still more severe, and which she had prevented me from sending.

*Thursday.*

'My good friend, Madame Le Vasseur is to write to you. I have desired her to tell you sincerely what she thinks. To remove from her all constraint I have intimated to her that I will not see her letter, and I beg of you not to repeat to me any part of its contents.

'I will not send my letter, because you do not choose I should; but, feeling myself grievously offended, it would be baseness and falsehood, of either of which it is impossible for me to be guilty, to acknowledge myself in the wrong. The Gospel commands him to whom a blow is given to turn the other cheek, but not to ask pardon. Do you remember the man in the comedy who exclaims, while he is giving another blows with his staff, 'This is the part of a philosopher'?

'Do not flatter yourself that he will be prevented from coming by the bad weather we now have. His rage will give him the time and strength which friendship refuses him, and it will be the first time in his life he ever came upon the day he had appointed. He will neglect nothing that he may come and repeat to me verbally the injuries with which he loads me in his letters. I will endure them with anything but patience. He will return to Paris to be ill again, and, according to custom, I shall be a very hateful man. What is to be done? Endure it all.

'But do not you admire the wisdom of the man who would absolutely come for me in a hackney-coach to dine at Saint-Denis, bring me home in a hackney-coach, and whose means, eight days afterwards, oblige him to come to the Hermitage on foot? (A, No. 34). It is not possible, to speak his own language, that this should be the style of sincerity. But were this

the case, strange changes of fortune must have happened in the course of a week.

‘I join in your affliction for the illness of madame your mother, but you will perceive that your grief is not equal to mine. We suffer less by seeing the persons we love ill than when they are unjust and cruel.

‘Adieu, my good friend; I shall never again mention to you this unhappy affair. You speak of going to Paris with an unconcern which, at any other time, would give me pleasure.’

I wrote to Diderot, telling him what I had done relative to Madame Le Vasseur, upon the proposal of Madame d’Épinay herself; and Madame Le Vasseur having, as it may be imagined, chosen to remain at the Hermitage, where she enjoyed a good state of health, always had company, and lived very agreeably. Diderot, not knowing what else to attribute to me as a crime, construed my precaution into one, and discovered another in Madame Le Vasseur continuing to reside at the Hermitage, although this was by her own choice, and though her going to Paris had depended, and still depended, upon herself, where she would continue to receive the same succours from me as I gave to her in my house.

This is the explanation of the first reproach in the letter of Diderot (No. 33). That of the second is in letter No. 34:—

‘*Le Lettré* (a name given in jest by Grimm to the son of Madame d’Épinay) must have informed you there were upon the rampart twenty poor persons who were dying with cold and hunger, and waiting for the liard you customarily gave them. This is a specimen of our little babbling—And if you understood the rest it would amuse you, perhaps.’

Here is my answer to this terrible argument, of which Diderot seemed so proud :—

‘I think I answered *Le Lettré*—that is, the Farmer-General’s son—that I did not pity the poor whom he had seen upon the rampart, waiting for my liard ; that he had probably amply made it up to them ; that I appointed him my substitute ; that the poor of Paris would have no reason to complain of the change ; and that I should not easily find so good a one for the poor of Montmorency, who were in much greater need of assistance. Here is a good and respectable old man, who, after having worked hard all his lifetime, no longer being able to continue his labours, is in his old days dying with hunger. My conscience is more satisfied with the two sous I give him every Monday than with the hundred liards I should have distributed amongst all the beggars on the rampart. You are pleasant men, you philosophers, while you consider the inhabitants of cities as the only persons whom you ought to befriend. It is in the country that men learn how to love and serve humanity ; all they learn in cities is to despise it.’

Such were the singular scruples upon which a man of sense had the folly to attribute to me as a crime my retiring from Paris, and pretended to prove to me by my own example that it was not possible to live out of the capital without becoming a bad man. I cannot at present conceive how I could be guilty of the folly of answering him, and of suffering myself to be angry, instead of laughing in his face. However, the decisions of Madame d’Épinay and the clamours of the Coterie Holbachique had so far operated in his favour that I was generally thought to be in the wrong ; and Madame d’Houdetot herself, very partial to Diderot, insisted upon my going to see him at Paris,

and making all the advances towards an accommodation which, full and sincere as it was on my part, was not of long duration. The victorious argument by which she subdued my heart was that at that moment Diderot was in distress. Besides the storm raised against the *Encyclopédie*, he had then another violent one to make head against, relative to his piece, which, notwithstanding the short history that he had printed at the beginning, he was accused of having entirely taken from Goldoni. Diderot, more wounded by criticisms than Voltaire, was overwhelmed by them. Madame de Grafigny had been malicious enough to spread a report that I had broken with him on this account. I thought it would be just and generous publicly to prove the contrary, and I went to pass two days, not only with him, but at his lodgings. This, since I had taken up my abode at the Hermitage, was my second journey to Paris. I had made the first to run to poor Gauffecourt, who had had a stroke of apoplexy, from which he has never perfectly recovered. I did not quit the side of his pillow until he was out of danger.

Diderot received me well. How many wrongs are effaced by the embraces of a friend! after these, what resentment can remain in the heart? We came to but little explanation. This is needless for reciprocal invectives. There is but one thing to be done, that is, to forget them. There had been no underhand proceedings, none at least that had come to my knowledge. Matters were not as they had been with Madame d'Épinay. He showed me the plan of *Le Père*

*de Famille*. 'This,' said I to him, 'is the best defence of *Le Fils Naturel*. Be silent, give your attention to this piece, and then throw it at the heads of your enemies as the only answer you think proper to make them.' He did so, and was satisfied with what he had done. I had six months before sent him the two first parts of my *Julie*, to have his opinion upon them. He had not yet read the work over. We read a part of it together. He called it all *feuillet*—that was his term, by which he meant loaded with words and redundancies. I myself had already perceived it; but it was the babbling of the fever: I have never been able to correct it. The last parts are different. The fourth especially, and the sixth, are masterpieces of diction.

The day after my arrival he insisted on taking me to sup with Monsieur d'Holbach. We were far from agreeing upon this point, for I wished even to get rid of the bargain for the manuscript on chemistry, for which I was enraged to be obliged to that man.<sup>1</sup> Diderot carried all before him. He swore that Monsieur d'Holbach loved me with all his heart, and said I must forgive him his manner, which was the same to everybody, and more disagreeable to his friends than to others. He observed to me that refusing the produce of this manuscript after having accepted it two years before was an affront to the donor which he had not deserved, and that my refusal might be interpreted into a secret reproach for

<sup>1</sup> Rousseau gives no other particulars of this affair, and his editors have been unable to throw any light upon it.

having waited so long to conclude the bargain. 'I see D'Holbach,' added he, 'every day, and know better than you do the nature of his disposition. Had you reason to be dissatisfied with him, do you think your friend capable of advising you to do a mean thing?' In short, with my accustomed weakness, I suffered myself to be prevailed upon, and we went to sup with the Baron, who received me as he usually had done. But his wife received me coldly, and almost uncivilly.<sup>1</sup> I saw nothing in her which resembled the amiable Caroline who, when a maid, treated me so kindly. I thought I had already perceived that since Grimm had frequented the D'Aine household I had not met there so friendly a reception.

Whilst I was at Paris, Saint-Lambert arrived there from the army. As I was not acquainted with his arrival I did not see him until after my return to the country, first at La Chevrette and afterwards at the Hermitage, to which he came with Madame d'Houdetot, and invited himself to dinner with me. It may be judged whether or not I received him with pleasure! But I felt one still greater at seeing the good understanding between my guests. Satisfied with not having disturbed their happiness, I myself was happy in being a witness to it; and I can safely assert that during the whole of my mad passion, and especially at the moment of which I speak, had it been in my power to take from him Madame d'Houdetot, I would not have done

<sup>1</sup> This was Baron d'Holbach's second wife, Caroline-Suzanne d'Aine, his deceased wife's sister.



it, nor should I have been so much as tempted to undertake it. I found her so earnest in her love for Saint-Lambert that I could scarcely imagine she would have been as much so had she loved me instead of him; and, without wishing to disturb their union, all that I really desired of her in my moments of passion was that she would permit herself to be loved. Finally, however violent my passion may have been for her, I found it as agreeable to be the confidant as the object of her amours; and I never for a moment considered her lover as a rival, but always as my friend. It will be said that this was not love. Be it so; but it was something more.

As for Saint-Lambert, he behaved like an honest and judicious man: as I was the only person culpable, so was I the only one who was punished; this, however, was with the greatest indulgence. He treated me severely, but in a friendly manner, and I perceived I had lost something in his esteem, but not the least part of his friendship. For this I consoled myself, knowing it would be much more easy to me to recover the one than the other, and that he had too much sense to confound an involuntary and fleeting weakness with a vice of character. If even I were in fault in all that had passed, I was but very little so. Had I first sought after his mistress? Had not he himself sent her to me? Did not she come in search of me? Could I avoid receiving her? What could I do? They themselves had done the evil, and I was the person on whom it fell. In my situation they

would have done as much as I did, and perhaps more: for, however estimable and faithful Madame d'Houdetot might be, she was still a woman; he was absent; opportunities were frequent, temptations strong, and it would have been very difficult for her always to have defended herself with the same success against a more enterprising man. It was assuredly much, in our situation, that we were able to set boundaries beyond which we never permitted ourselves to pass.

Although at the bottom of my heart I found evidence sufficiently honourable in my favour, so many appearances were against me, that the invincible shame always predominant gave me, in his presence, the appearance of guilt; and this he took advantage of for the purpose of humbling me: a single circumstance will describe this reciprocal situation. I read to him, after dinner, the letter I had written the preceding year to Voltaire, and of which Saint-Lambert had heard mention. Whilst I was reading he fell asleep; and I, lately so haughty, at present so foolish, dared not stop, and continued to read whilst he continued to snore. Such were my indignities, and such his revenge; but his generosity never permitted him to exercise it except amongst our three selves.

After his return to the army, I found Madame d'Houdetot greatly changed in her manner with me. At this I was as much surprised as if I ought not to have expected it; it affected me more than it ought to have done, and did me considerable harm. It seemed that everything

from which I expected a cure plunged still deeper into my heart the dart which I at length broke off rather than drew out.

I was quite determined to conquer myself, and leave no means untried to change my foolish passion into a pure and lasting friendship. For this purpose I had formed the finest projects in the world, for the execution of which the concurrence of Madame d'Houdetot was necessary. When I wished to speak to her, I found her absent and embarrassed; I perceived I was no longer agreeable to her, and that something had passed which she would not communicate to me, and which I have never yet known.<sup>1</sup> This change, and the impossibility of knowing the reason of it, grieved me to the heart. She asked me for her letters; these I returned her with a fidelity which she did me the wrong to doubt for a moment. This doubt was another unexpected wound given to my heart, with which she must have been so well acquainted. She did me justice, but not immediately. I understood that an examination of the packet I had given her made her perceive her error. I saw she reproached herself with it, by which I regained something. She could not take back her letters without returning me mine. She told me she had burned them: of this I dared to doubt in my turn, and I confess I doubt of it at

<sup>1</sup> The cause was an anonymous letter, exciting Saint-Lambert's jealousy against Madame d'Houdetot, who was represented as favouring the attentions of Rousseau. It proceeded from Grimm, who worded it in such a way that it might easily be attributed to Jean-Jacques.

this moment. No; such letters are never thrown into the fire. Those of *Julie* have been found ardent. Heavens! what would have been said of these? No, no; she who can inspire a like passion will never have the courage to burn the proofs of it. But I am not afraid of her having made a bad use of them: of this I do not think her capable; and, besides, I had taken proper measures to prevent it. The foolish but strong apprehension of raillery had made me begin this correspondence in a manner to secure my letters from all communication. I carried the familiarity I permitted myself with her in my intoxication so far as to address her in the singular number: but what *theeing* and *thouing*! she certainly could not be offended with it. Yet she several times complained, but this was always useless: her complaints had no other effect than that of awakening my fears, and I, besides, could not suffer myself to lose ground. If these letters be not yet destroyed, and should they ever be made public, the world will see in what manner I have loved.<sup>1</sup>

The grief caused me by the coldness of Madame d'Houdetot, and the certainty of not having deserved it, made me take the singular resolution to complain of it to Saint-Lambert himself. While waiting the effect of the letter I wrote to him on the subject, I sought dissipations to which I ought sooner to have had

<sup>1</sup> Madame d'Houdetot is said to have kept back four of these epistles, which she gave to Saint-Lambert, who afterwards burned them. One of them was published by Musset-Pathay in Rousseau's *Correspondance*.

recourse. Fêtes were given at La Chevrette, for which I composed music. The pleasure of honouring myself in the eyes of Madame d'Houdetot by a talent she loved warmed my imagination ; and another object contributed to give it still more animation : this was the desire the author of *Le Devin du Village* had of showing he understood music ; for I had perceived that some persons had, for a considerable time past, endeavoured to render this doubtful, at least with respect to composition. My beginning at Paris, the ordeal through which I had repeatedly passed there, both at the house of Monsieur Dupin and of Monsieur de la Poplinière ; the quantity of music I had composed during fourteen years in the midst of the most celebrated masters and before their eyes ; finally, the opera of the *Muses Galantes*, and even that of *Le Devin* ; a motet I had composed for Mademoiselle Fel, and which she had sung at the Concert Spirituel ; the frequent conferences I had had upon this fine art with the first composers, all seemed to prevent or dissipate a doubt of such a nature. This, however, existed even at La Chevrette, and in the mind of Monsieur d'Épinay himself. Without appearing to observe it, I undertook to compose for him a motet for the dedication of the Chapel of La Chevrette, and I begged him to make choice of the words. He directed De Linant, his son's tutor, to furnish me with these. De Linant gave me words proper to the subject, and in a week after I had received them the motet was finished. This time spite was my Apollo, and never did

more intelligent music come from my hand. The words began with : 'Ecce sedes hic Torantis.'<sup>1</sup> The grandeur of the opening is suitable to the words, and the rest of the motet is so elegantly harmonious that every one was struck with it. I had composed it for a great orchestra. D'Épinay procured the best symphonists. Madame Bruna, an Italian singer, sang the motet, and was well accompanied. The composition succeeded so well that it was afterwards performed at the Concert Spirituel, where, in spite of secret cabals and poor execution, it was twice generally applauded. I gave, for the birthday of Monsieur d'Épinay, the idea of a kind of piece half dramatic and half pantomimical, which Madame d'Épinay worked out, and for which I supplied the music. Grimm, on his arrival, heard some talk of my musical success. An hour afterwards not a word more was said upon the subject ; but there no longer remained a doubt—not at least that I know of—of my knowledge of composition.

Grimm was scarcely arrived at La Chevrette—where already I did not find much amusement—before he made it insupportable to me by airs I never before saw in any person, and of which I had no idea. The evening before he came I was dislodged from the best visitor's chamber, contiguous to that of Madame d'Épinay ; it was prepared for Grimm, and, instead of it, I was put into another further off. 'Behold,' said I laughingly to Madame d'Épinay, 'how

<sup>1</sup> I have since learned these were by Santeuil, and that Monsieur de Linant had quietly appropriated them to himself.—R.

new comers displace the old.' She seemed embarrassed. I was better acquainted the same evening with the reason for the change, in learning that between her chamber and that I had quitted there was a secret door which she had thought needless to show to me. Her intercourse with Grimm was not unknown either in her own house or to the public, not even to her husband; yet, far from confessing it to me, the confidant of secrets more important to her, and which she was sure would be faithfully kept, she constantly denied it in the strongest manner. I comprehended that this reserve proceeded from Grimm, who, though intrusted with all my secrets, did not choose I should be the depository of any of his.

However prejudiced I was in favour of this man by former sentiments, which were not extinguished, and by the real merit he had, all was not proof against the care he took to destroy it. He received me like the Comte de Tuffière;<sup>1</sup> he scarcely deigned to return my salute; he never once spoke to me, and soon showed me that I must not speak to him by not making me any answer; he everywhere passed first, and took the first place, without ever paying me the least attention. All this would have been supportable had he not accompanied it with a shocking affectation, which may be judged of by one example taken from a hundred. One evening Madame d'Épinay, finding herself a little indisposed, ordered some trifle for her supper to be carried into her chamber, and

<sup>1</sup> A character in Destouches' comedy *Le Glorieux*.

went upstairs to sup by the side of the fire. She asked me to go with her, which I did. Grimm came afterwards. The little table was already placed, and there were but two covers. Supper was served : Madame d'Épinay took her place on one side of the fire ; Grimm took an arm-chair, seated himself at the other, drew the little table between them, opened his napkin, and prepared himself for eating without speaking to me a single word. Madame d'Épinay blushed at his behaviour, and, to induce him to repair his rudeness, offered me her place.. He said nothing, nor did he even look at me. Not being able to approach the fire, I walked about the chamber until a cover was brought. Indisposed as I was, older than himself, longer acquainted in the house than he had been, the person who had introduced him there, and to whom, as favourite of the lady, he ought to have done the honours of it, he suffered me to sup at the end of the table, at a distance from the fire, without showing me the least civility. His whole behaviour to me corresponded with this example of it. He did not treat me precisely as his inferior, but he looked upon me as a cipher. I could scarcely recognise the same *cuisinier* who, in the house of the Prince de Saxe-Gotha, thought himself honoured when I cast my eyes upon him. I had still more difficulty in reconciling this profound silence and insulting haughtiness with the tender friendship he professed for me to those whom he knew to be real friends. It is true the only proofs he gave of it was pitying my wretched fortune, of which I did not



complain ; compassionating my sad fate, with which I was satisfied ; and lamenting to see me obstinately refuse the benevolent services that he said he wished to render me. Thus was it that he artfully made the world admire his affectionate generosity, blame my ungrateful misanthropy, and insensibly accustomed people to imagine there was nothing more between a protector like him and a poor creature like myself than a connection founded upon benefactions on one part and obligations on the other, without once thinking of a friendship between equals. For my part, I have vainly sought to discover in what way I was under an obligation to this new protector. I had lent him money, he had never lent me any ; I had attended him in his illness, he scarcely came to see me in mine ; I had given him all my friends, he never had given me any of his. I had said everything I could in his favour, and he—if ever he has spoken of me, it has been less publicly and in another manner. He has never either rendered or offered me the least service of any kind. How, therefore, was he my Mæcenas ? In what manner was I protected by him ? This was incomprehensible to me, and still remains so.

It is true, he was more or less arrogant with everybody, but with none so brutally as with me. I remember Saint-Lambert once ready to throw a plate at his head, upon his indirectly giving him the lie at the table by vulgarly saying, ‘That is not true.’ With his naturally imperious manner, he had the self-sufficiency of an upstart, and became ridiculous by being

extravagantly impertinent. An intercourse with the great had so far intoxicated him that he gave himself airs which none but the least intelligent among them ever assume. He never called his lackey but by 'Eh!' as if, amongst the number of his servants, my lord had not known which was in waiting. When he sent him to buy anything, he threw the money upon the ground instead of putting it into his hand. In short, entirely forgetting he was a man, he treated him with such shocking contempt and so cruel a disdain in everything, that the poor lad, a very good creature, whom Madame d'Épinay had recommended, quitted his service without any other complaint than that of the impossibility of enduring such treatment. This was the La Fleur of this new Glorieux.

As foolish as he was vain, with his great wandering eyes and his misshapen countenance, he posed as an admirer of the ladies; and after the farce that he enacted when rejected by Mademoiselle Fel, he passed with many of them for a man of noble sentiments. This had obtained for him a certain vogue, and had given him a taste for effeminate neatness: he began to act the beau; his toilette became an affair of much importance; all the world knew that he used cosmetics; and I, who at first refused to credit this, commenced to believe it, not only because of his fine colour, and from having observed receptacles for white ceruse on his dressing-table, but from finding him engaged on my entrance one morning in rubbing his nails with a little brush, made for the purpose,

a task which he continued to perform in my presence. I was of opinion that a man who could spend two hours daily in rubbing his nails was very likely to spend a few minutes in filling up the wrinkles in his skin. The bonhomme Gauffecourt, who was by no means malicious, had, not unhappily, given him the nickname of Tiran le Blanc.

All these things were nothing more than ridiculous, but, being quite opposite to my character, they contributed to render his suspicious to me. I could easily imagine that a man whose head was so much deranged could not have a heart well placed. He piqued himself upon nothing so much as upon sensibility of mind and true sentiment. How could this agree with defects which are peculiar to little minds? How can the continued overflowings of a susceptible heart suffer it to be incessantly employed in so many little cares relative to the person? Heaven knows that he who feels his heart inflamed with this celestial fire strives to diffuse it, and wishes to show what he internally is. He would wish to place his heart in his countenance, and could not conceive of other paint for his cheeks.

I remembered the summary of his morality which Madame d'Épinay had mentioned to me and adopted. This consisted in one single article: that the sole duty of man is to follow all the inclinations of his heart. This morality, when I heard it mentioned, gave me great matter of reflection, although I at first considered it solely as a play of wit. But I soon

perceived that this principle was really the rule of his conduct, of which I afterwards had, at my cost, but too many convincing proofs. This is the interior doctrine that Diderot has so frequently intimated to me, but which I never heard him explain.

I remember having several years before been frequently told that this man was false, that he had nothing more than the appearance of sentiment, and particularly that he did not love me. I recollected several little anecdotes which I had heard of him from Monsieur de Francueil and Madame de Chenonceaux, neither of whom esteemed him, and to whom he must have been known, as Madame de Chenonceaux was daughter to Madame de Rochechouart, the intimate friend of the late Comte de Fricse, and that Monsieur de Francueil, at that time very intimate with the Vicomte de Polignac, had lived a good deal at the Palais-Royal precisely when Grimm began to introduce himself there. All Paris heard of his despair after the death of the Vicomte de Fricse. It was necessary to support the reputation he had acquired after the rigours of Mademoiselle Fel, and of which I, more than any other person, should have seen the imposture had I then been less blind. He had to be dragged to the Hôtel de Castries, where he worthily played his part, abandoned to the most mortal affliction. There he every morning went into the garden to weep at his ease, holding before his eyes his handkerchief moistened with tears as long as he was in sight of the hotel; but, at the turning

of a certain alley, people of whom he little thought saw him instantly put his handkerchief into his pocket and take out a book. This observation, which was repeatedly made, soon became public in Paris, and was almost as soon forgotten. I myself had forgotten it—a circumstance in which I was concerned brought it to my recollection. I was at the point of death in my bed in the Rue de Grenelle; he was in the country; he came one morning, quite out of breath, to see me, saying he had arrived in town that very instant; a moment afterwards I learned that he had arrived the evening before, and had been seen at the theatre.

I heard a thousand things of the same kind; but an observation, which I was surprised not to have made sooner, struck me more than everything else. I had given to Grimm all my friends without exception; they were become his. I was so inseparable from him that I should have had some difficulty in continuing to visit at a house where he was not received. Madame de Créqui was the only person who refused to admit him into her company, and whom, for that reason, I have seldom seen since. Grimm, on his part, made himself other friends, as well by his own means as by those of the Comte de Friesse. Of all these, not one of them ever became my friend; he never said a word to induce me even to become acquainted with them, and not one of those I sometimes met at his apartments ever showed me the least good-will; the Comte de Friesse, in whose house he lived, and with whom it consequently would have been agreeable to me to

form some connection, not excepted, nor the Comte de Schomberg, his relation, with whom Grimm was still more intimate.

More than this, my own friends, whom I made his, and who were all tenderly attached to me before this acquaintance, were sensibly changed the moment it was made. He never gave me one of his; I gave him all mine, and he ended by taking them all from me. If these be the effects of friendship, what are those of enmity?

Diderot himself told me several times at the beginning that Grimm, in whom I had so much confidence, was not my friend. He changed his language subsequently, when he was no longer so himself.

The manner in which I had disposed of my children wanted not the concurrence of any person. Yet I informed some of my friends of it, solely to make it known to them, and that I might not in their eyes appear better than I was. These friends were three in number—Diderot, Grimm, and Madame d'Épinay. Duclos, the most worthy of my confidence, was the only real friend whom I did not inform of it. He nevertheless knew what I had done. By whom? I know not. It is not very probable that the perfidy came from Madame d'Épinay, who knew that by following her example, had I been capable of doing it, I had in my power the means of a cruel revenge. It remains, therefore, between Grimm and Diderot, then so much united, especially against me, and it is probable that this crime was common to them both. I

would lay a wager that Duclos, to whom I never told my secret, and who consequently was under no restraint, is the only person who has not disclosed it.

Grimm and Diderot, in their project to take from me the *gouverneuses*, had used the greatest efforts to make Duclos enter into their views; this he disdainfully refused to do. It was not until some time afterwards that I learned from him what had passed between them on the subject; but I learned at the time from Thérèse enough to perceive that there was some secret design, and that they wished to dispose of me, if not against my own consent, at least without my knowledge, or had an intention of making these two persons serve as instruments of some project they had in view. This was far from upright conduct. The opposition of Duclos is a convincing proof of it. They who think proper may believe it to be friendship.

This pretended friendship was as fatal to me at home as it was abroad. The long and frequent conversations with Madame Le Vasseur for several years past had made a sensible change in this woman's behaviour to me, and the change was far from being in my favour. What was the subject of these singular conversations? Why such a profound mystery? Was the conversation of that old woman agreeable enough to take her into favour, and of sufficient importance to make it so great a secret? During the two or three years these colloquies had, from time to time, been continued, they had appeared to me ridiculous; but when I thought of them again

they began to astonish me. This astonishment would have been carried to inquietude had I then known what this old woman was preparing for me.

Notwithstanding the pretended zeal for my welfare of which Grimm made such a public boast, difficult to reconcile with the airs he gave himself when we were together, I heard nothing of him from any quarter the least to my advantage, and his feigned commiseration tended less to do me service than to render me contemptible. He deprived me as much as he possibly could of the resource I found in the employment I had chosen by decrying me as a bad copyist, and I confess that he spoke the truth; but, in this case, it was not for him to do it. He proved himself in earnest by employing another copyist, and by depriving me of as many patrons as he could persuade to dismiss me. His intention might have been supposed to be that of reducing me to a dependence upon him and his credit for subsistence, and to cut off the latter until I was brought to that degree of distress.

All things considered, my reason imposed silence upon my former prejudice, which still pleaded in his favour. I judged his character to be at least suspicious; and with respect to his friendship, I positively decided it to be false. I then resolved to see him no more, and informed Madame d'Épinay of the resolution I had taken, supporting it with several unanswerable facts, which I have now forgotten.

She strongly combated my resolution, without knowing how to reply to the reasons on which



it was founded. She had not concerted with him; but the next day, instead of explaining herself verbally, she gave me a very skilfully composed letter they had drawn up together, and by which, without entering into a detail of facts, she justified him by his reserved and meditative character, attributed to me as a crime my having suspected him of perfidy towards his friend, and exhorted me to come to an accommodation with him. This letter staggered me. In a conversation we afterwards had together, and in which I found her better prepared than she had been the first time, I suffered myself to be quite prevailed upon, and was inclined to believe I might have judged erroneously. In this case I thought I really had done a friend a very serious injury, which it was my duty to repair. In short, as I had already done several times with Diderot and the Baron d'Holbach, half from inclination, and half from weakness, I made all the advances I had a right to require. I went to Monsieur Grimm, like another George Dandin, to make him my apologies for the offence he had given me, still in the false persuasion—which, in the course of my life, has made me guilty of a thousand meanesses to my pretended friends—that there is no hatred which may not be disarmed by mildness and fair behaviour; whereas, on the contrary, the hatred of the wicked becomes still more envenomed by the impossibility of finding anything to found it upon, and the sentiment of their own injustice is but another cause of offence against the person who is the object of it.

I have, without going further than my own history, a very strong proof of this maxim in Grimm and in Tronchin: both become my most implacable enemies from inclination, pleasure, and fancy, without having been able to charge me with having done either of them the most trifling injury,<sup>1</sup> and whose rage, like that of tigers, becomes daily more fierce by the facility of satiating it.

I expected that Grimm, confused by my condescension and advances, would receive me with open arms and the most tender friendship. He received me as a Roman Emperor would have done, and with a haughtiness I never saw in any person but himself. I was by no means prepared for such a reception. When, in the embarrassment of the unaccustomed part I had to act, I had, in a few words and with a timid air, fulfilled the object which had brought me to him, before he received me into favour he pronounced, with a deal of majesty, a harangue that he had prepared, and which contained a long enumeration of his rare virtues, and especially those connected with friendship. He laid great stress upon a thing which at first struck me a good deal—this was his having always preserved the same friends. Whilst he was yet speaking I said to myself it would be cruel for me to be the only exception to this

<sup>1</sup> I did not give the surname of *Jongleur* to the latter until long after his declared hostility, and the bitter persecutions he brought upon me at Geneva and elsewhere. I even quickly suppressed the name when I perceived that I was entirely his victim. Mean vengeance is unworthy of my heart, and hatred never takes the least root in it.—R.

rule. He returned to the subject so frequently, and with such emphasis, that I thought if in this he followed nothing but the sentiments of his heart he would be less struck with the maxim, and that he made of it an art useful to his views, by procuring the means of accomplishing them. Until then I had been in the same situation; I had preserved all my first friends, even from my tenderest infancy, without having lost one of them except by death, and yet I had never before made the reflection. It was not a maxim that I had prescribed to myself. Since, therefore, the advantage was common to both, why did he boast of it in preference, if he had not previously intended to deprive me of the merit? He afterwards endeavoured to humble me by proofs of the preference our common friends gave to him over me. With this I was as well acquainted as himself; the question was by what means had he obtained it—whether by merit or address? by exalting himself, or endeavouring to abase me? At last, when he had placed between us all the distance that could add to the value of the favour he was about to confer, he granted me the kiss of peace, in a slight embrace which resembled the accolade which the King gives to new-made knights. I was stupefied with surprise; I knew not what to say; not a word could I utter. This whole scene had the appearance of the reprimand a preceptor gives to his pupil, while he graciously spares the rod. I never think of it without perceiving to what degree judgments founded upon appearances, to which the vulgar

give so much weight, are deceitful, and how frequently audacity and pride are found in the guilty, and shame and embarrassment in the innocent. .

We were reconciled. This was a relief to my heart, which every kind of quarrel fills with anguish. It will naturally be supposed that a reconciliation of this kind changed nothing in his manners; all it effected was to deprive me of the right of complaining of them. For this reason I took a resolution to endure everything, and for the future to say not a word.

So many successive vexations overwhelmed me to such a degree as to leave me but little power over my mind. Receiving no answer from Saint-Lambert, neglected by Madame d'Houdetot, and no longer daring to open my heart to any person, I began to be afraid that by making friendship my idol I had been sacrificing my whole life to chimeras. Experience proved that of all my intimate acquaintances there remained but two men who had preserved my esteem, and in whom my heart could confide: Duclos, of whom since my retreat to the Hermitage I had lost sight, and Saint-Lambert. I thought the only means of repairing the wrongs I had done the latter was to unbosom myself without reserve; and I resolved to confess to him everything, taking care, however, that his mistress should not be compromised. I have no doubt but this was another snare of my passion to keep me nearer to her person; but I should certainly have had no reserve with her lover, entirely submitting to his direction, and carrying

sincerity as far as it was possible to do it. I was on the point of writing to him a second letter, to which I was certain he would have returned an answer, when I learned the melancholy cause of his silence relative to the first. He had been unable to support until the end the fatigues of the campaign. Madame d'Épinay informed me that he had had an attack of the palsy, and Madame d'Houdetot, whose affliction was so great that she herself became ill, and was unable to reply at once, wrote to me two or three days afterwards from Paris, saying that he was going to Aix-la-Chapelle to take the benefit of the waters. I will not say that this melancholy circumstance afflicted me as it did her ; but I am of opinion that my grief of heart was as painful as her tears. The pain of knowing him to be in such a state, increased by the fear lest inquietude should have contributed to occasion it, affected me more than anything that had yet happened, and I felt most cruelly a want of fortitude, which in my estimation was necessary to enable me to support so many misfortunes. Happily this generous friend did not long leave me so greatly overwhelmed : he did not forget me, notwithstanding his attack ; and I soon learned from himself that I had ill-judged his sentiments, and been too much alarmed for his situation. It is now time to come to the grand revolution of my destiny, to the catastrophe which has divided my life into two parts so different from each other, and which, from a very trifling cause, produced such terrible effects.

One day, little thinking of what was to happen,

Madame d'Épinay sent for me. The moment I saw her I perceived in her eyes and whole countenance an appearance of uneasiness, which struck me the more as this was not customary, nobody knowing better than she did how to govern their features and movements. 'My friend,' said she to me, 'I am going to set off for Geneva; my chest is in a bad state, and my health is so deranged that I must go and consult Tronchin.' I was the more astonished at this resolution, so suddenly taken, and at the beginning of the bad season of the year, as thirty-six hours before she had not, when I left her, said anything of the matter. I asked her whom she would take with her. She said her son and Monsieur de Linant; and afterwards carelessly added, 'And you, my dear bear, will not you go also?' As I did not think she spoke seriously, knowing that at that season of the year I was scarcely in a situation to leave my chamber, I jested upon the utility of the company of one sick person to another. She herself had not seemed to make the proposition seriously, and here the matter dropped. The rest of our conversation ran upon the necessary preparations for her journey, about which she busied herself eagerly, being determined to set off within a fortnight.

I needed little penetration to perceive that some circumstance which was concealed from me was the secret motive of this journey. This circumstance—which was no secret to any one in the house save me—was discovered next day by Thérèse, to whom Tessier, the maître d'hôtel, who had learned it from the femme de chambre,

revealed it.<sup>1</sup> Though under no obligation to Madame d'Épinay to keep this secret, as I was not told it by her, it is too closely related to others that were confided to me to permit a disentanglement; on this head I shall therefore be mute. But these secrets, which never have been and never will be disclosed by me either in speech or writing, have been known to so many persons that none in Madame d'Épinay's circle can be ignorant of them.

Had I been informed respecting the true motive of this journey, I should have detected the hidden action of a hostile hand in the attempt to make me play the chaperon to Madame d'Épinay; but she had pressed the matter so faintly that I persisted in refusing to regard the project seriously, and only laughed at the fine figure I should have cut had I been so foolish as to acquiesce. However, she was a gainer by my refusal, for she succeeded in getting her husband to accompany her.

A few days afterwards I received from Diderot the note I am going to transcribe. This note, simply doubled up, so that the contents could be easily read, was addressed to me at Madame d'Épinay's and sent to the care of Monsieur de Linant, tutor to the son and confidant to the mother.

<sup>1</sup> Madame d'Épinay was then enceinte. The motives for Grimm's conduct at this juncture, and other circumstances that our author leaves unexplained, are fully set forth in Musset-Pathay's *Histoire de la Vie de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Paris, 1827—a work which gives the result of much acuteness and research.

## NOTE FROM DIDEROT (A, No. 52).

'I am naturally disposed to love you, and am born to give you trouble. I am informed that Madame d'Épinay is going to Geneva, and do not hear that you are to accompany her. My friend, if you are satisfied with Madame d'Épinay, you must go with her; if dissatisfied, you ought still less to hesitate. Do you find the weight of the obligations you have received from her burdensome to you? This is an opportunity of discharging a part of them, and relieving your mind. Do you ever expect another opportunity like the present one of giving her proofs of your gratitude? She is going to a country where she will be quite a stranger. She is ill, and will stand in need of amusement and dissipation. The winter season too!—consider, my friend. Your ill state of health may be a much greater objection than I think it is; but are you now more indisposed than you were a month ago, or than you will be at the beginning of spring? Will you, three months hence, be in a situation to perform the journey more comfortably than at present? For my part, I cannot but observe to you, that were I unable to bear the shaking of the carriage, I would take my staff and follow her. Have you no fears too lest your conduct should be misinterpreted? You will be suspected of ingratitude or of some other secret motive. I well know that, let you do as you will, you will have in your favour the testimony of your conscience; but will this alone be sufficient, and is it permitted to neglect to a certain degree the opinion of others? What I now write, my good friend, is to acquit myself of what I think I owe to us both. Should my letter displease you, throw it into the fire and forget that it was ever written. I salute, love, and embrace you.'

Although trembling and almost blind with rage whilst I read this epistle, so much so, indeed, that I could hardly finish it, I remarked the address with which Diderot affected a milder and more polite language than he had done in his former ones, wherein he never went farther than 'my dear,' without ever deigning to add



the name of 'friend.' I easily discovered the second-hand means by which the letter was conveyed to me; the superscription, manner, and form awkwardly betrayed the manœuvre, for we commonly wrote to each other 'by post, or by the Montmorency messenger, and this was the first and only time he sent me his letter by this channel.

As soon as the first transports of my indignation permitted me to write, I, with great precipitation, wrote him the following answer, which I immediately carried from the Hermitage, where I then was, to La Chevrette, to show it to Madame d'Épinay, to whom in my blind rage I desired to read the contents, as well as the letter from Diderot.

'You cannot, my dear friend, either know the magnitude of the obligations I am under to Madame d'Épinay, to what a degree I am bound by them, whether she is desirous of my accompanying her, whether this is possible, or the reasons I may have for my non-compliance. I have no objection to discuss all these points with you; but you will in the meantime confess that prescribing to me so positively what I ought to do, without first enabling yourself to judge of the matter, is, my dear philosopher, acting most inconsiderately. What is still worse, I perceive the opinion you give comes not from yourself. Besides my being but little disposed to suffer myself to be led by the nose under your name by any third or fourth person, I observe in this secondary advice certain under-hand dealing, which ill agrees with your candour, and from which you will, on your account as well as mine, do well in future to abstain.

'You are afraid my conduct should be misinterpreted, but I defy a heart like yours to think ill of mine. Others would, perhaps, speak better of me if I resembled them more. God preserve me from gaining their approbation!

Let the vile and wicked watch over my conduct and misinterpret my actions, Rousseau is not a man to be afraid of them, nor is Diderot one to hearken to them.

‘If I am displeased with your letter, you wish me to throw it into the fire, and pay no attention to the contents. Do you imagine that anything coming from you can be forgotten in such a manner? You hold, my dear friend, my tears as cheap in the pain you give me as you do my life and health in the cares you exhort me to undertake. Could you but break yourself of this your friendship would be more pleasing to me, and I should be less to be pitied.’

On entering the chamber of Madame d’Épinay I found Grimm with her, at which I was highly delighted. I read to them, in a loud and clear voice, the two letters, with an intrepidity of which I should not have thought myself capable, and concluded with a few observations not out of keeping with it. At this unexpected audacity in a man generally timid they were struck dumb with surprise. I perceived that arrogant man look down upon the ground, not daring to meet my eyes, which sparkled with indignation; but in the bottom of his heart he from that instant resolved upon my destruction, and I am certain that they concerted measures to that effect before they separated.

It was much about this time that I at length received, through Madame d’Houdetot, the answer from Saint-Lambert (A, No. 57)—dated from Wolfenbuttel, a few days after his accident—to my letter, which had been long delayed upon the road. This answer gave me the consolation of which I then stood so much in need; it was full of assurances of esteem and

friendship, and these gave me strength and courage to deserve them. From that moment I did my duty ; but certainly had Saint-Lambert been less reasonable, generous, and honest, I was inevitably lost.

The season became bad, and people began to quit the country. Madame d'Houdetot informed me of the day on which she intended to come and bid adieu to the valley, and gave me a rendezvous at Eaubonne. This happened to be the same day on which Madame d'Épinay left La Chevrette to go to Paris for the purpose of completing the preparations for her journey. Fortunately she set off in the morning, and I had still time to go and dine with her sister-in-law. I had the letter from Saint-Lambert in my pocket, and read it over several times as I walked along. This letter served me as a shield against my weakness. I made and kept to the resolution of seeing nothing in Madame d'Houdetot but my friend and the mistress of Saint-Lambert, and I passed four or five hours in a most delicious calm, infinitely preferable, even with respect to enjoyment, to those attacks of a burning fever which always, until that moment, I had had when in her presence. As she too well knew that my heart was not changed, she was sensible of the efforts I made to conquer myself, and esteemed me the more for them, and I had the pleasure of perceiving that her friendship for me was not extinguished. She announced to me the approaching return of Saint-Lambert, who, although fairly recovered from his attack, was

unable to bear the fatigues of war, and was quitting the service, to come and live in peace with her. We formed the charming project of an intimate connection among us three, and had reason to hope that it would be lasting, since it was founded upon every sentiment by which honest and susceptible hearts could be united; and we had moreover amongst us all the knowledge and talents necessary to be sufficient to ourselves, without the aid of any foreign supplement. Alas! in abandoning myself to the hope of so agreeable a life, I little suspected that which awaited me.

We afterwards spoke of my situation with Madame d'Epinaÿ. I showed her the letter from Diderot, with my answer to it; I related to her everything that had passed upon the subject, and declared to her my resolution of quitting the Hermitage. This she vehemently opposed, and by reasons all-powerful over my heart. She expressed to me how much she could have wished I had been of the party to Geneva, foreseeing she should inevitably be considered as having caused the refusal, which the letter of Diderot seemed previously to announce. However, as she was as well aware of my reasons as I myself, she did not insist upon this point, but conjured me to avoid coming to an open rupture, let it cost me what mortification it would, and to palliate my refusal by reasons sufficiently plausible to banish all unjust suspicions of her having been the cause of it. I told her the task she imposed on me was not easy, but that, resolved

to expiate my faults at the expense of my reputation, I would give the preference to hers in everything that honour permitted me to suffer. It will soon be seen whether or not I fulfilled this engagement.

My passion was so far from having lost any part of its force, that I never in my life loved my Sophie so ardently and tenderly as on that day; but such was the impression made upon me by the letter of Saint-Lambert, the sentiment of my duty, and the horror in which I held perfidy, that during the whole time of the interview my senses left me in peace, and I was not so much as tempted to kiss her hand. At parting she embraced me before her servants. This embrace, so different from those I had sometimes stolen from her under the foliage, proved that I was become master of myself; and I am certain that had my mind, undisturbed, had time to acquire more firmness, three months would have cured me radically.

Here end my personal connections with Madame d'Houdetot—connections of which each has been able to judge by appearances according to the disposition of his own heart, but in which the passion inspired in me by that amiable woman, the most lively passion perhaps that man ever felt, will be honourable in our own consciences by the rare and painful sacrifice we both made to duty, honour, love, and friendship. We each had too high an opinion of the other easily to suffer ourselves to do anything derogatory to our dignity. We must have been unworthy of all esteem had we not set a proper

value upon one like this ; and the very energy of the sentiments which might have rendered us culpable was that which prevented us from becoming so.

Thus after a long friendship for one of these women, and the strongest affection for the other, I bade them both adieu on the same day—to one, never to see her more ; to the other, to see her again but twice, upon occasions of which I shall hereafter speak.

After their departure, I found myself much embarrassed to fulfil so many pressing and contradictory duties, the consequences of my imprudence. Had I been in my natural situation, after the proposition and refusal of the journey to Geneva, I had only to remain quiet, and everything was as it should be. But I had foolishly made of it an affair which could not remain in the state it was, and an explanation was absolutely necessary, unless I quitted the Hermitage, which I had just promised Madame d'Houdetot not to do, at least for the present. Moreover, she had required me to make known the reasons for my refusal to my pretended friends, that it might not be imputed to her. Yet I could not state the true reason without doing an outrage to Madame d'Épinay, who certainly had a right to my gratitude for what she had done for me. Everything well considered, I found myself reduced to the severe but indispensable necessity of failing in respect either to Madame d'Épinay, to Madame d'Houdetot, or to myself, and it was the last whom I resolved to make my victim. This

I did without hesitation, openly and fully, and with so much generosity as to make the act worthy of expiating the faults which had reduced me to such an extremity. This sacrifice, taken advantage of by my enemies, and which they perhaps expected, has ruined my reputation, and, by their assiduity, deprived me of the esteem of the public; but it has restored to me my own, and given me consolation in my misfortunes. This, as will hereafter appear, is not the last time I made such a sacrifice, nor that advantage was taken of it to do me an injury.

Grimm was the only person who appeared to have taken no part in the affair, and it was to him that I determined to address myself. I wrote him a long letter, in which I set forth the ridiculousness of considering it as my duty to accompany Madame d'Épinay to Geneva, the inutility of the measure, and the embarrassment even it would have caused her, besides the inconvenience to myself. I could not resist the temptation of letting him perceive in this letter how fully I was informed, and that to me it appeared singular I should be expected to undertake the journey while he himself dispensed with it, and that his name was never mentioned. This letter, wherein, on account of my not being able clearly to state my reasons, I was often obliged to wander from the text, would have rendered me culpable in the eyes of the public; but it was a model of reservedness and discretion for the people who, like Grimm, were fully acquainted with the things I for-

bore to mention, and which completely justified my conduct. I did not even hesitate to raise another prejudice against myself in attributing the advice of Diderot to my other friends. This I did to insinuate that Madame d'Houdetot had been of the same opinion, as she really was ; and in not mentioning that, upon the reasons I gave her, she thought differently, I could not better remove the suspicion of her having connived at my proceedings than by appearing dissatisfied with her behaviour.

This letter was concluded by an act of confidence which would have had an effect upon any other man, for, in desiring Grimm to weigh my reasons and afterwards to give me his opinion, I informed him that, let this be what it would, I should act accordingly—and such was my intention, had he even thought I ought to set off ; for, Monsieur d'Épinay having appointed himself the conductor of his wife, my going with them would then have had a different appearance, whereas it was I who, in the first place, was asked to take upon me that employment, and he was out of the question until after my refusal.

The answer from Grimm was slow in coming. It was singular enough, on which account I will here transcribe it. (See A, No. 59.)

‘The departure of Madame d'Épinay is postponed. Her son is ill, and it is necessary to wait until his health is re-established. I will consider the contents of your letter. Remain quiet at your Hermitage. I will send you my opinion in good time. As she will certainly not set off for some days there is no immediate occasion for it. In



the meantime you may, if you think proper, make her your offers, although this to me seems a matter of indifference. For, knowing your situation as well as you do yourself, I doubt not of her returning to your offers such an answer as she ought to do; and all the advantage which, in my opinion, can result from this will be your having it in your power to say to those by whom you may be importuned that your not being of the travelling party was not for want of offers made to that effect. Moreover, I do not see why you will absolutely have it that the philosopher is the speaking-trumpet of all the world, nor, because he is of opinion that you ought to go, why you should imagine that all your friends think as he does. If you write to Madame d'Épinay her answer will be yours to all your friends, since you have it so much at heart to give them all an answer. Adieu. I embrace Madame Le Vasseur and *Le Criminel*.<sup>1</sup>

Stricken with astonishment at reading this letter, I vainly endeavoured to find out what it meant. However, instead of answering me with simplicity, he took time to consider of what I had written, as if the time he had already taken were not sufficient. He intimates even the state of suspense in which he wishes to keep me, as if a profound problem were to be resolved, or that it was of importance to his views to deprive me of every means of comprehending his intentions until the moment when he should think proper to make them known. What therefore did he mean by these precautions, delays, and mysteries? Is it thus that confidence should be reciprocated? Is this manner of

<sup>1</sup> Monsieur Le Vasseur, whose wife governed him rather rudely, called her the 'Lieutenant-Criminel.' Grimm jestingly gave the same name to the daughter, and, by way of abridgment, was pleased to retrench the first word.

acting consistent with honour and uprightness? I vainly sought for some favourable interpretation of his conduct. It was impossible to find one. Whatever his design might be, were this inimical to me, his situation facilitated the execution of it without its being possible for me in mine to oppose the least obstacle. Enjoying favour in the house of a great prince, having an extensive acquaintance, and giving the tone to common circles of which he was the oracle, he had it in his power, with his usual address, to dispose everything as he pleased; and I, alone in my Hermitage, far removed from all society, without the benefit of advice, and having no communication with the world, had nothing to do but to wait in peace. All I did was to write to Madame d'Épinay upon the illness of her son as polite a letter as could be written, but in which I did not fall into the snare of offering to accompany her to Geneva.

After waiting for a long time in the cruel uncertainty into which that barbarous man had plunged me, I learned, at the expiration of eight or ten days, that Madame d'Épinay had set off, and received from him a second letter. It contained not more than seven or eight lines, which I did not entirely read. It was a rupture, but in such terms as the most infernal hatred only can dictate, and these became unmeaning by the excessive degree of acrimony with which he wished to charge them. He forbade me his presence as he would have forbidden me his states. All that was wanting to his letter to make it laughable was that it should be read.

over with coolness. Without taking a copy of it, or reading the whole of the contents, I returned it him immediately, accompanied by the following note :—

‘I refused to admit the force of the just reasons that I had for distrust. Now, when it is too late, I am become sufficiently acquainted with your character.

‘This then is the letter upon which you took time to meditate. I return it to you ; it is not for me. You may show mine to the whole world, and hate me openly. This on your part will be a falsehood the less.’

My telling him that he might show my preceding letter related to an article in his by which his profound address throughout the whole affair may be judged of.

I have observed that my letter might inculcate me in the eyes of persons unacquainted with the particulars of what had passed. This he was delighted to discover ; but how was he to take advantage of it without exposing himself? By showing the letter he ran the risk of being reproached for abusing the confidence of his friend.

To relieve himself from this embarrassment he resolved to break with me in the most pointed manner possible, and to set forth in his letter the favour he did me in not showing mine. He was certain that in my indignation and anger I should refuse his feigned discretion, and permit him to show my letter to everybody. This was what he wished for, and everything turned out as he had expected it would. He sent my letter all over Paris, with his own commentaries upon it, which, however, were

not so successful as he expected them to be. It was not judged that the permission he had extorted to make my letter public exempted him from the blame of having so lightly taken me at my word to do me an injury. People continually asked what personal complaints he had against me to authorise so violent a hatred. Finally, it was thought that even if my behaviour had been such as to authorise him to break with me, friendship, although extinguished, had rights which he ought to have respected. But unfortunately Paris is frivolous ; remarks of the moment are soon forgotten, the absent and unfortunate are neglected, the man who prospers secures favour by his presence, the intriguing and malicious support each other, renew their vile efforts, and the effects of these, incessantly succeeding each other, efface everything by which they were preceded.

Thus, after having so long deceived me, this man threw aside his mask, convinced that, in the state to which he had brought things, he no longer stood in need of it. Relieved from the fear of being unjust towards the wretch, I left him to his own reflections, and thought no more of him. A week afterwards I received an answer from Madame d'Épinay, dated from Geneva (B, No. 10). I understood by the tone which she assumed, for the first time in her life, that both, depending upon the success of their measures, acted in concert, and, considering me as a man inevitably lost, intended to give themselves the pleasure of completing my destruction.

In fact, my situation was deplorable. I perceived all my friends withdrawing themselves from me without my knowing how or why. Diderot, who boasted of the continuance of his attachment, and who for three months past had promised me a visit, did not come. The winter began to make its appearance, and brought with it my habitual disorders. My constitution, although vigorous, had been unequal to the combat of so many opposite passions. I was so exhausted that I had neither strength nor courage sufficient to resist the most trifling indisposition. Had my engagements and the continued remonstrances of Diderot and Madame d'Houdetot then permitted me to quit the Hermitage, I knew not where to go, nor in what manner to drag myself along. I remained stupid and immovable, powerless for action or thought. The mere idea of a step to take, of a letter to write, or a word to say, made me tremble; I could not, however, refrain from replying to the letter of Madame d'Épinay without acknowledging myself to be worthy of the treatment with which she and her friend overwhelmed me. I determined upon notifying to her my sentiments and resolutions, not doubting for a moment that from humanity, generosity, propriety, and the good sentiments that I imagined I had observed in her, notwithstanding her bad ones, she would immediately subscribe to them. My letter was as follows :—

‘THE HERMITAGE, 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 1757.

‘Were it possible to die of grief, I should not now be alive. But I have at length decided what to do.

Friendship, madame, is extinguished between us, but that which no longer exists still has its rights, and I respect them. I have not forgotten your goodness to me ; and you may, on my part, expect as much gratitude as it is possible to have towards a person I must no longer love. All further explanation would be useless. I have in my favour my own conscience, and I ask you to consult your own.

‘I wished to quit the Hermitage, and I ought to have done it ; but I am told that I must stay there until spring ; and since my friends desire it I will remain there until that season, if you will consent.’

After writing and despatching this letter, all I thought of was remaining quiet at the Hermitage, and taking care of my health ; of endeavouring to recover my strength, and taking measures to remove in the spring without noise or making the rupture public. But these were not the intentions either of Grimm or of Madame d'Épinay, as will presently appear.

A few days afterwards I had the pleasure of receiving from Diderot the visit he had so frequently promised, and in which he had as constantly failed. He could not have come more opportunely : he was my oldest friend, almost the only one who remained to me ; the pleasure I felt in seeing him, as things were circumstanced, may easily be imagined. My heart was full, and I disclosed it to him. I explained to him several facts, which either had not come to his knowledge, or had been disguised or falsified. I informed him, as far as I could do it with propriety, of all that had passed. I did not affect to conceal from him that with which he was but too well

acquainted, that a passion equally unreasonable and unfortunate had been the cause of my destruction; but I never acknowledged that Madame d'Houdetot had been made acquainted with it, or that I had declared it to her. I mentioned to him the unworthy manœuvres of Madame d'Épinay to intercept the innocent letters her sister-in-law wrote me. I was determined that he should hear the particulars from the mouth of the persons whom she had attempted to seduce. Thérèse related them with great precision; but what was my astonishment when the mother came to speak, and I heard her declare and maintain that nothing of this had come to her knowledge! These were her words, from which she would never depart. Not four days before, she herself had recited to me all the particulars, and in presence of my friend she contradicted me to my face. This, to me, was decisive, and I then clearly saw my imprudence in having for so long a time kept such a woman near me. I made no use of invective; I scarcely deigned to speak to her a few words of contempt. I felt what I owed to the daughter, whose steadfast uprightness was a perfect contrast to the base manœuvres of the mother. But from that moment my resolution was taken relative to the old woman, and I waited for nothing but to put it into execution.

This presented itself sooner than I expected. On the 10th of December I received from Madame d'Épinay the following answer to my preceding letter (B, No. 11):—

‘GENEVA, 1st December 1757.

‘After having for several years given you every possible sign of friendship and kindly interest, all I can now do is to pity you. You are very unhappy. I wish your conscience may be as calm as mine; this may be necessary to the repose of your whole life.

‘Since you determined to quit the Hermitage, and were persuaded that you ought to do it, I am astonished your friends have prevailed upon you to stay there. For my part, I never consult mine upon my duty, and I have nothing further to say to you upon your own.’

‘Such an unforeseen dismissal, and so plainly pronounced, left me not a moment to hesitate. It was necessary to quit immediately, let the weather and my health be in what state they might, although I were to sleep in the woods, and upon the snow, with which the ground was then covered, and in defiance of everything Madame d’Houdetot might say; for I was willing to do everything to please her except render myself infamous.

I never had been so embarrassed in my whole life as I then was; but my resolution was taken. I swore, let what would happen, not to sleep at the Hermitage on the night of that day week. I began to prepare for sending away my effects, resolving to leave them in the open field rather than not give up the key by the end of the week; for I was determined everything should be done before a letter could be written to Geneva, and an answer to it received. I never felt myself so inspired with courage; I had recovered all my strength. Honour and indignation, upon which Madame d’Épinay had not calculated, contributed to restore me to vigour. Fortune aided



my audacity. Monsieur Mathas, procureur-fiscal of Monsieur le Prince de Condé, heard of my embarrassment. He sent to offer me a little house he had in his garden of Mont-Louis, at Montmorency. I accepted it with eagerness and gratitude. The bargain was soon concluded. I immediately sent to purchase a little furniture, to add to that we already had, to accommodate Thérèse and me. My effects I had carted away with a deal of trouble, and at a great expense. Notwithstanding the ice and snow, my removal was completed in a couple of days, and on the 15th of December I gave up the keys of the Hermitage, after having paid the wages of the gardener, though unable to pay my rent.

With respect to Madame Levasseur, I told her that we must part. Her daughter attempted to make me change my resolution, but I was inflexible. I sent her off to Paris in the messenger's carriage, with all the furniture and effects she and her daughter had in common. I gave her some money, and engaged to pay her lodging with her children, or elsewhere, to provide for her subsistence as well as it should be possible for me to do it, and never to let her want bread as long as I should have it myself.

Finally, the second day after my arrival at Mont-Louis, I wrote to Madame d'Épinay the following letter :—

‘MONTMORENCY, 17th December 1757.

‘Nothing, madame, is so natural and necessary as to leave your house the moment you no longer approve of my remaining there. Upon your refusing your consent

to my passing the rest of the winter at the Hermitage, I quitted it on the 15th of December. My destiny was to enter it in spite of myself and to leave it in the same fashion. I thank you for the residence you prevailed upon me to make there, and I would thank you still more had I paid for it less dearly. You are right in believing me unhappy; nobody upon earth knows better than yourself to what a degree I must be so. If being deceived in the choice of our friends be a misfortune, it is another not less cruel to recover from so pleasing an error.'

Such is the faithful narration of my residence at the Hermitage, and of the reasons which obliged me to leave it. I could not cut short the recital; it was necessary to continue it with the greatest exactness, this epoch of my life having had upon the rest of it an influence which will extend to my latest hour.

END OF VOL. III.











